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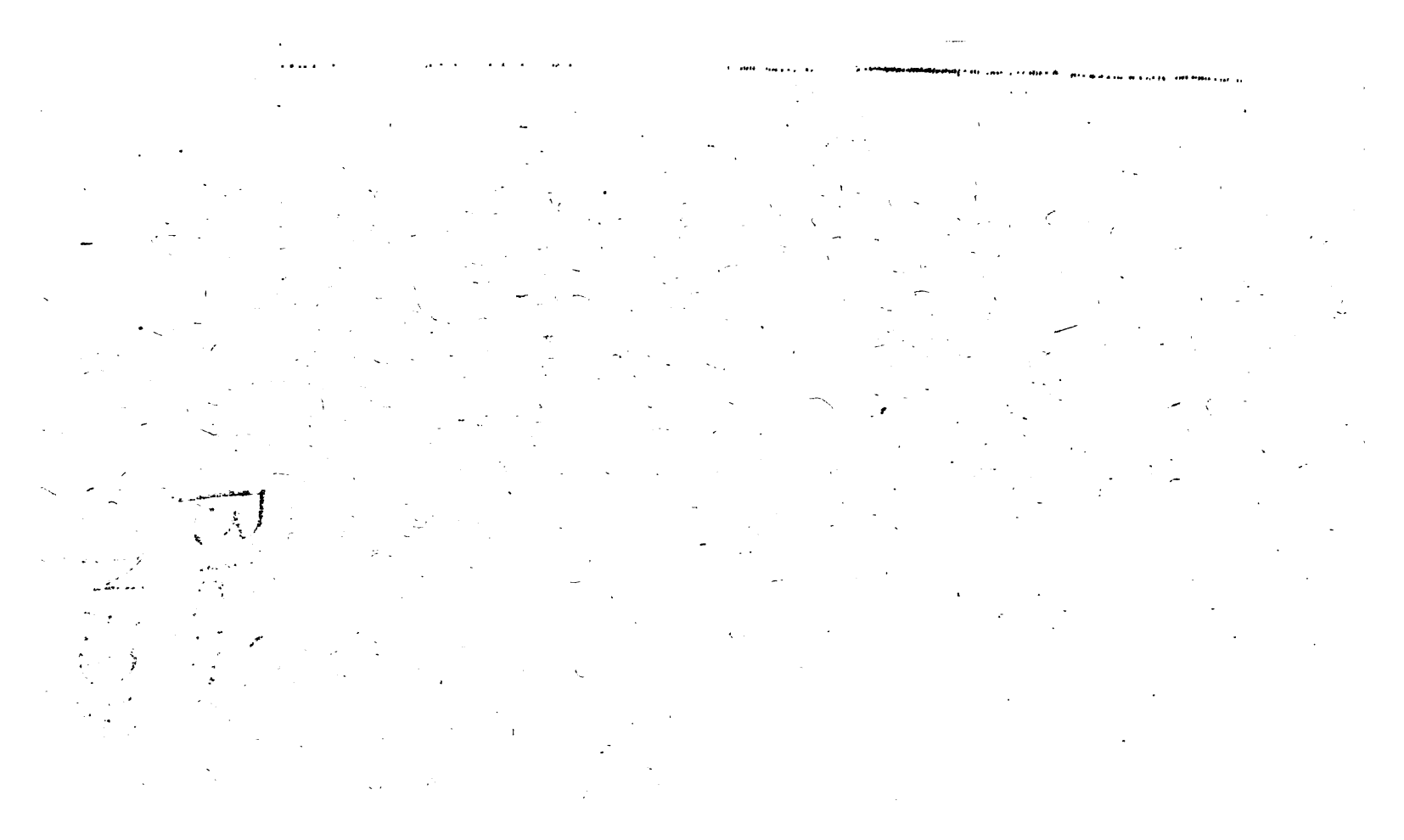

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HUGH BLAIR. D.D.

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LECTURES

ON

RHETORIC

AND

BELLES LETTRES.

By HUGH BLAIR, D.D. & F.R.S. Ed.

ONE OF THE MINISTERS OF THE HIGH CHURCH, AND PROFESSOR OF RHETORIC AND BELLES LETTRES IN THE UNIVERSITY OF EDINBURGH.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

THE ELEVENTH EDITION.

LONDON:

PRINTED FOR T. CADELL AND W. DAVIES, IN THE STRAND; AND W. CREECH, EDINBURGH.

1809.

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PREFACE.

THE following LECTURES were read in the Univerſity of Edinburgh, for Twenty-four years. The publication of them, at preſent, was not altogether a matter of choice. Imperfect Copies of them in Manuſcript, from Notes taken by Students who heard them read, were firſt privately handed about; and afterwards frequently expoſed to public ſale. When the Author ſaw them circulate ſo currently, as even to be quoted in print *, and found himſelf often threatened with ſurreptitious publications of them, he judged it to be high time that they ſhould proceed from his own hand, rather than come into public view under ſome very defective and erroneous form.

THEY were originally deſigned for the initiation of Youth into the ſtudy of Belles

* Biographia Britannica. Article ADDISON.

Lettres, and of Compoſition. With the ſame intention they are now publiſhed; and therefore, the form of Lectures, in which they were at firſt compoſed, is ſtill retained. The Author gives them to the world, neither as a work wholly original, nor as a Compilation from the Writings of others. On every ſubject contained in them, he has thought for himſelf. He conſulted his own ideas and reflections: and a great part of what will be found in theſe Lectures is entirely his own. At the ſame time, he availed himſelf of the ideas and reflections of others, as far as he thought them proper to be adopted. To proceed in this manner was his duty as a Public Profeſſor. It was incumbent on him, to convey to his Pupils all the knowledge that could improve them; to deliver not merely what was new, but what might be uſeful, from whatever quarter it came. He hopes, that to ſuch as are ſtudying to cultivate their Taſte, to form their Style, or to prepare themſelves for Public Speaking or Compoſition, his Lectures will afford a more comprehenſive view of what relates to theſe ſubjects, than, as far

far as he knows, is to be received from any one Book in our Language.

In order to render his Work of greater ſervice, he has generally referred to the Books which he conſulted, as far as he remembers them; that the readers might be directed to any farther illuſtration which they afford. But, as ſuch a length of time has elapſed ſince the firſt Compoſition of his Lectures, he may, perhaps, have adopted the ſentiments of ſome Author into whoſe Writings he had then looked, without now remembering whence he derived them.

In the opinions which he has delivered concerning ſuch a variety of Authors, and of literary matters, as come under his conſideration, he cannot expect that all his Readers will concur with him. The ſubjects are of ſuch a nature, as allow room for much diverſity of taſte and ſentiment: and the Author will reſpectfully ſubmit to the judgment of the Public.

Retaining the ſimplicity of the Lecturing Style, as beſt fitted for conveying inſtruction,

inſtruction, he has aimed, in his Language, at no more than perſpicuity. If, after the liberties which it was neceſſary for him to take, in criticiſing the Style of the moſt eminent Writers in our Language, his own Style ſhall be thought open to reprehenſion, all that he can ſay, is, that his Book will add one to the many proofs already afforded to the world, of its being much eaſier to give inſtruction, than to ſet example.

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LECTURE I.

INTRODUCTION.

ONE of the moſt diſtinguiſhed privileges which Providence has conferred upon mankind, is the power of communicating their thoughts to one another. Deſtitute of this power, Reaſon would be a ſolitary, and, in ſome meaſure, an unavailing principle. Speech is the great inſtrument by which man becomes beneficial to man: and it is to the intercourſe and tranſmiſſion of thought, by means of ſpeech, that we are chiefly indebted for the improvement of thought itſelf. Small are the advances which a ſingle unaſſiſted individual can make towards perfecting any of his powers. What we call human reaſon, is not the effort or ability of one, ſo much as it is the reſult of the reaſon of many, ariſing from lights mutually communicated, in conſequence of diſcourſe and writing. LECT. I.

IT is obvious, then, that writing and diſcourſe are objects entitled to the higheſt attention. Whether

LECT. I. ther the influence of the ſpeaker, or the entertainment of the hearer, be conſulted; whether utility or pleaſure be the principal aim in view, we are prompted, by the ſtrongeſt motives, to ſtudy how we may communicate our thoughts to one another with moſt advantage. Accordingly we find, that in almoſt every nation, as ſoon as language had extended itſelf beyond that ſcanty communication which was requiſite for the ſupply of men's neceſſities, the improvement of diſcourſe began to attract regard. In the language even of rude uncultivated tribes, we can trace ſome attention to the grace and force of thoſe expreſſions which they uſed, when they ſought to perſuade or to affect. They were early ſenſible of a beauty in diſcourſe, and endeavoured to give it certain decorations which experience had taught them it was capable of receiving, long before the ſtudy of thoſe decorations was formed into a regular art.

But, among nations in a civilized ſtate, no art has been cultivated with more care, than that of language, ſtyle, and compoſition. The attention paid to it may, indeed, be aſſumed as one mark of the progreſs of ſociety towards its moſt improved period. For, according as ſociety improves and flouriſhes, men acquire more influence over one another by means of reaſoning and diſcourſe; and in proportion as that influence is felt to enlarge, it muſt follow, as a natural conſequence, that they will beſtow more care upon the methods of expreſſing their conceptions with propriety and

eloquence. Hence we find, that, in all the polished nations of Europe, this study has been treated as highly important, and has possessed a considerable place in every plan of liberal education. LECT. I.

INDEED, when the arts of speech and writing are mentioned, I am sensible that prejudices against them are apt to rise in the minds of many. A sort of art is immediately thought of, that is ostentatious and deceitful; the minute and trifling study of words alone; the pomp of expression; the studied fallacies of rhetoric; ornament substituted in the room of use. We need not wonder, that, under such imputations, all study of discourse as an art should have suffered in the opinion of men of understanding; and I am far from denying, that rhetoric and criticism have sometimes been so managed as to tend to the corruption, rather than to the improvement, of good taste and true eloquence. But sure it is equally possible to apply the principles of reason and good sense to this art, as to any other that is cultivated among men. If the following Lectures have any merit, it will consist in an endeavour to substitute the application of these principles in the place of artificial and scholastic rhetoric; in an endeavour to explode false ornament, to direct attention more towards substance than show, to recommend good sense as the foundation of all good composition, and simplicity as essential to all true ornament.

LECT. I. WHEN entering on the ſubject, I may be allowed, on this occaſion, to ſuggeſt a few thoughts concerning the importance and advantages of ſuch ſtudies, and the rank they are entitled to poſſeſs in academical education*. I am under no temptation, for this purpoſe, of extolling their importance at the expence of any other department of ſcience. On the contrary, the ſtudy of Rhetoric and Belles Lettres ſuppoſes and requires a proper acquaintance with the reſt of the liberal arts. It embraces them all within its circle, and recommends them to the higheſt regard. The firſt care of all ſuch as wiſh either to write with reputation, or to ſpeak in public ſo as to command attention, muſt be, to extend their knowledge; to lay in a rich ſtore of ideas relating to thoſe ſubjects of which the occaſions of life may call them to diſcourſe or to write. Hence, among the ancients, it was a fundamental principle, and frequently inculcated, "Quod omnibus diſciplinis et artibus debet eſſe inſtructus orator;" that the orator ought to be an accompliſhed ſcholar, and converſant in every part of learning. It is indeed impoſſible to contrive an

* The Author was the firſt who read Lectures on this ſubject in the Univerſity of Edinburgh. He began with reading them in a private character in the year 1759. In the following year he was choſen Profeſſor of Rhetoric by the Magiſtrates and Town-council of Edinburgh; and, in 1762, His Majeſty was pleaſed to erect and endow a Profeſſion of Rhetoric and Belles Lettres in that Univerſity; and the Author was appointed the firſt Regius Profeſſor.

art,

art, and very pernicious it were if it could be contrived, which ſhould give the ſtamp of merit to any compoſition rich or ſplendid in expreſſion, but barren or erroneous in thought. They are the wretched attempts towards an art of this kind which have ſo often diſgraced oratory, and debaſed it below its true ſtandard. The graces of compoſition have been employed to diſguiſe or to ſupply the want of matter; and the temporary applauſe of the ignorant has been courted, inſtead of the laſting approbation of the diſcerning. But ſuch impoſture can never maintain its ground long. Knowledge and ſcience muſt furniſh the materials that form the body and ſubſtance of any valuable compoſition. Rhetoric ſerves to add the poliſh; and we know that none but firm and ſolid bodies can be poliſhed well. LECT. I

Of thoſe who peruſe the following Lectures, ſome, in conſequence either of their profeſſion, or of their prevailing inclination, may have the view of being employed in compoſition, or in public ſpeaking. Others, without any proſpect of this kind, may wiſh only to improve their taſte with reſpect to writing and diſcourſe, and to acquire principles which will enable them to judge for themſelves in that part of literature called the Belles Lettres.

With reſpect to the former, ſuch as may have occaſion to communicate their ſentiments to the Public, it is abundantly clear that ſome preparation of ſtudy is requiſite for the end which they have in

LECT. I. view. To ſpeak or to write perſpicuouſly and agreeably, with purity, with grace and ſtrength, are attainments of the utmoſt conſequence to all who propoſe, either by ſpeech or writing, to addreſs the Public. For without being maſter of thoſe attainments, no man can do juſtice to his own conceptions; but how rich ſoever he may be in knowledge and in good ſenſe, will be able to avail himſelf leſs of thoſe treaſures, than ſuch as poſſeſs not half his ſtore, but who can diſplay what they poſſeſs with more propriety. Neither are theſe attainments of that kind for which we are indebted to nature merely. Nature has, indeed, conferred upon ſome a very favourable diſtinction in this reſpect, beyond others. But in theſe, as in moſt other talents ſhe beſtows, ſhe has left much to be wrought out by every man's own induſtry. So conſpicuous have been the effects of ſtudy and improvement in every part of eloquence; ſuch remarkable examples have appeared of perſons ſurmounting, by their diligence, the diſadvantages of the moſt untoward nature; that among the learned it has long been a conteſted, and remains ſtill an undecided point, whether nature or art confer moſt towards excelling in writing and diſcourſe.

WITH reſpect to the manner in which art can moſt effectually furniſh aſſiſtance for ſuch a purpoſe, there may be diverſity of opinions. I by no means pretend to ſay that mere rhetorical rules, how juſt ſoever,

ever, are sufficient to form an orator. Suppos- SECT. I.
ing natural genius to be favourable, more by a great deal will depend upon private application and study, than upon any system of instruction that is capable of being publicly communicated. But at the same time, though rules and instructions cannot do all that is requisite, they may, however, do much that is of real use. They cannot, it is true, inspire genius; but they can direct and assist it. They cannot remedy barrenness; but they may correct redundancy. They point out proper models for imitation. They bring into view the chief beauties that ought to be studied, and the principal faults that ought to be avoided; and thereby tend to enlighten taste, and to lead genius from unnatural deviations, into its proper channel. What would not avail for the production of great excellencies, may at least serve to prevent the commission of considerable errors.

All that regards the study of eloquence and composition, merits the higher attention upon this account, that it is intimately connected with the improvement of our intellectual powers. For I must be allowed to say, that when we are employed after a proper manner, in the study of composition, we are cultivating reason itself. True rhetoric and sound logic are very nearly allied. The study of arranging and expressing our thoughts with propriety, teaches to think, as well as to speak, accurately. By putting our sentiments into words,

LECT. I. we always conceive them more diſtinctly. Every one who has the ſlighteſt acquaintance with compoſition knows, that when he expreſſes himſelf ill on any ſubject, when his arrangement is looſe, and his ſentences become feeble, the defects of his ſtyle can, almoſt on every occaſion, be traced back to his indiſtinct conception of the ſubject; ſo cloſe is the connection between thoughts, and the words in which they are clothed.

THE ſtudy of compoſition, important in itſelf at all times, has acquired additional importance from the taſte and manners of the preſent age. It is an age wherein improvements, in every part of ſcience, have been proſecuted with ardour. To all the liberal arts much attention has been paid; and to none more than to the beauty of language, and the grace and elegance of every kind of writing. The public ear is become refined. It will not eaſily bear what is ſlovenly and incorrect. Every author muſt aſpire to ſome merit in expreſſion, as well as in ſentiment, if he would not incur the danger of being neglected and deſpiſed.

I WILL not deny that the love of minute elegance, and attention to inferior ornaments of compoſition, may at preſent have engroſſed too great a degree of the public regard. It is indeed my opinion, that we lean to this extreme; often more careful of poliſhed ſtyle, than of ſtoring it with thought. Yet hence ariſes a new reaſon for the ſtudy of juſt and proper compoſition. If it be requiſite not to be

be deficient in elegance or ornament in times when they are in ſuch high eſtimation, it is ſtill more requiſite to attain the power of diſtinguiſhing falſe ornament from true, in order to prevent our being carried away by that torrent of falſe and frivolous taſte, which never fails, when it is prevalent, to ſweep along with it the raw and the ignorant. They who have never ſtudied eloquence in its principles, nor have been trained to attend to the genuine and manly beauties of good writing, are always ready to be caught by the mere glare of language; and when they come to ſpeak in public, or to compoſe, have no other ſtandard on which to form themſelves, except what chances to be faſhionable and popular, how corrupted ſoever, and erroneous, that may be. LECT. I.

But as there are many who have no ſuch objects as either compoſition or public ſpeaking in view, let us next conſider what advantages may be derived by them, from ſuch ſtudies as form the ſubject of theſe Lectures. To them rhetoric is not ſo much a practical art as a ſpeculative ſcience; and the ſame inſtructions which aſſiſt others in compoſing, will aſſiſt them in diſcerning, and reliſhing, the beauties of compoſition. Whatever enables genius to execute well, will enable taſte to criticiſe juſtly.

When we name criticiſing, prejudices may perhaps ariſe, of the ſame kind with thoſe which I mentioned before with reſpect to rhetoric. As rhetoric

LECT. I. rhetoric has been ſometimes thought to ſignify nothing more than the ſcholaſtic ſtudy of words and phraſes, and tropes, ſo criticiſm has been conſidered as merely the art of finding faults; as the frigid application of certain technical terms, by means of which perſons are taught to cavil and cenſure in a learned manner. But this is the criticiſm of pedants only. True criticiſm is a liberal and humane art. It is the offspring of good ſenſe and refined taſte. It aims at acquiring a juſt diſcernment of the real merit of authors. It promotes a lively reliſh of their beauties, while it preſerves us from that blind and implicit veneration which would confound their beauties and faults in our eſteem. It teaches us, in a word, to admire and to blame with judgment, and not to follow the crowd blindly.

In an age when works of genius and literature are ſo frequently the ſubjects of diſcourſe, when every one erects himſelf into a judge, and when we can hardly mingle in polite ſociety without bearing ſome ſhare in ſuch diſcuſſions; ſtudies of this kind, it is not to be doubted, will appear to derive part of their importance from the uſe to which they may be applied in furniſhing materials for thoſe faſhionable topics of diſcourſe, and thereby enabling us to ſupport a proper rank in ſocial life.

But I ſhould be ſorry if we could not reſt the merit of ſuch ſtudies on ſomewhat of ſolid and intrinſical

intrinſical uſe, independent of appearance and ſhow. The exerciſe of taſte and of ſound criticiſm, is in truth one of the moſt improving employments of the underſtanding. To apply the principles of good ſenſe to compoſition and diſcourſe; to examine what is beautiful, and why it is ſo; to employ ourſelves in diſtinguiſhing accurately between the ſpecious and the ſolid, between affected and natural ornament, muſt certainly improve us not a little in the moſt valuable part of all philoſophy, the philoſophy of human nature. For ſuch diſpoſitions are very intimately connected with the knowledge of ourſelves. They neceſſarily lead us to reflect on the operations of the imagination, and the movements of the heart; and increaſe our acquaintance with ſome of the moſt refined feelings which belong to our frame. LECT. I.

Logical and ethical diſquiſitions move in a higher ſphere, and are converſant with objects of a more ſevere kind; the progreſs of the underſtanding in its ſearch after knowledge, and the direction of the will in the proper purſuit of good. They point out to man the improvement of his nature as an intelligent being; and his duties as the ſubject of moral obligation. Belles Lettres and criticiſm chiefly conſider him as a being endowed with thoſe powers of taſte and imagination, which were intended to embelliſh his mind, and to ſupply him with rational and uſeful entertainment. They open a field of inveſtigation peculiar to themſelves.

LECT. I. themſelves. All that relates to beauty, harmony, grandeur, and elegance; all that can ſooth the mind, gratify the fancy, or move the affections, belongs to their province. They preſent human nature under a different aſpect from that which it aſſumes when viewed by other ſciences. They bring to light various ſprings of action, which, without their aid, might have paſſed unobſerved; and which, though of a delicate nature, frequently exert a powerful influence on ſeveral departments of human life.

SUCH ſtudies have alſo this peculiar advantage, that they exerciſe our reaſon without fatiguing it. They lead to inquiries acute, but not painful; profound, but not dry nor abſtruſe. They ſtrew flowers in the path of ſcience; and while they keep the mind bent in ſome degree, and active, they relieve it, at the ſame time, from that more toilſome labour to which it muſt ſubmit in the acquiſition of neceſſary erudition, or the inveſtigation of abſtract truth.

THE cultivation of taſte is farther recommended by the happy effects which it naturally tends to produce on human life. The moſt buſy man, in the moſt active ſphere, cannot be always occupied by buſineſs. Men of ſerious profeſſions cannot always be on the ſtretch of ſerious thought. Neither can the moſt gay and flouriſhing ſituations of fortune afford any man the power of filling all his hours with pleaſure. Life muſt always languiſh in the

the hands of the idle. It will frequently languiſh even in the hands of the buſy, if they have not ſome employment ſubſidiary to that which forms their main purſuit. How then ſhall theſe vacant ſpaces, thoſe unemployed intervals, which, more or leſs, occur in the life of every one, be filled up? How can we contrive to diſpoſe of them in any way that ſhall be more agreeable in itſelf, or more conſonant to the dignity of the human mind, than in the entertainments of taſte, and the ſtudy of polite literature? He who is ſo happy as to have acquired a reliſh for theſe, has always at hand an innocent and irreproachable amuſement for his leiſure hours, to ſave him from the danger of many a pernicious paſſion. He is not in hazard of being a burden to himſelf. He is not obliged to fly to low company, or to court the riot of looſe pleaſures, in order to cure the tedioufneſs of exiſtence. LECT. I.

PROVIDENCE ſeems plainly to have pointed out this uſeful purpoſe to which the pleaſures of taſte may be applied, by interpoſing them in a middle ſtation between the pleaſures of ſenſe and thoſe of pure intellect. We were not deſigned to grovel always among objects ſo low as the former; nor are we capable of dwelling conſtantly in ſo high a region as the latter. The pleaſures of taſte refreſh the mind after the toils of the intellect, and the labours of abſtract ſtudy; and they gradually raiſe it above the attachments of ſenſe, and prepare it for the enjoyments of virtue.

SECT. I. So conſonant is this to experience, that, in the education of youth, no object has in every age appeared more important to wiſe men, than to tincture them early with a reliſh for the entertainments of taſte. The tranſition is commonly made with eaſe from theſe to the diſcharge of the higher and more important duties of life. Good hopes may be entertained of thoſe whoſe minds have this liberal and elegant turn. It is favourable to many virtues. Whereas, to be entirely devoid of reliſh for eloquence, poetry, or any of the fine arts, is juſtly conſtrued to be an unpromiſing ſymptom of youth; and raiſes ſuſpicions of their being prone to low gratifications, or deſtined to drudge in the more vulgar and illiberal purſuits of life.

THERE are indeed few good diſpoſitions of any kind with which the improvement of taſte is not more or leſs connected. A cultivated taſte increaſes ſenſibility to all the tender and humane paſſions, by giving them frequent exerciſe; while it tends to weaken the more violent and fierce emotions.

—— Ingenuas didiciſſe fideliter artes
Emollet mores, nec finit eſſe feros *.

The elevated ſentiments and high examples which poetry, eloquence, and hiſtory are often bringing under our view, naturally tend to nouriſh in our

* Theſe poliſh'd arts have humaniz'd mankind,
Soften'd the rude, and calm'd the boiſt'rous mind.

minds

minds public ſpirit, the love of glory, contempt of external fortune, and the admiration of what is truly illuſtrious and great. LECT. I.

I WILL not go ſo far as to ſay that the improvement of taſte and of virtue is the ſame; or that they may always be expected to co-exiſt in an equal degree. More powerful correctives than taſte can apply are neceſſary for reforming the corrupt propenſities which too frequently prevail among mankind. Elegant ſpeculations are ſometimes found to float on the ſurface of the mind, while bad paſſions poſſeſs the interior regions of the heart. At the ſame time this cannot but be admitted, that the exerciſe of taſte is, in its native tendency, moral and purifying. From reading the moſt admired productions of genius, whether in poetry or proſe, almoſt every one riſes with ſome good impreſſions left on his mind: and though theſe may not always be durable, they are at leaſt to be ranked among the means of diſpoſing the heart to virtue. One thing is certain, and I ſhall hereafter have occaſion to illuſtrate it more fully, that, without poſſeſſing the virtuous affections in a ſtrong degree, no man can attain eminence in the ſublime parts of eloquence. He muſt feel what a good man feels, if he expects greatly to move, or to intereſt mankind. They are the ardent ſentiments of honour, virtue, magnanimity, and public ſpirit, that only can kindle that fire of genius, and call up into the mind thoſe high

LECT. I. high ideas, which attract the admiration of ages; and if this ſpirit be neceſſary to produce the moſt diſtinguiſhed efforts of eloquence, it muſt be neceſſary alſo to our reliſhing them with proper taſte and feeling.

On theſe general topics I ſhall dwell no longer; but proceed directly to the conſideration of the ſubjects which are to employ the following Lectures: They divide themſelves into five parts. Firſt, ſome introductory diſſertations on the Nature of Taſte, and upon the Sources of its Pleaſures: Secondly, the conſideration of Language: Thirdly, of Style: Fourthly, of Eloquence properly ſo called, or public ſpeaking in its different kinds: Laſtly, a critical examination of the moſt diſtinguiſhed Species of Compoſition, both in proſe and verſe.

LECTURE II.

TASTE.

LECT. II.

THE nature of the preſent undertaking leads me to begin with ſome inquiries concerning Taſte, as it is this faculty which is always appealed to in diſquiſitions concerning the merit of diſcourſe and writing.

THERE are few ſubjects on which men talk more looſely and indiſtinctly than on Taſte; few which it is more difficult to explain with preciſion; and none which in this Courſe of Lectures will appear more dry or abſtract. What I have to ſay on the ſubject ſhall be in the following order. I ſhall firſt explain the Nature of Taſte as a power or faculty in the human mind. I ſhall next conſider how far it is an improveable faculty. I ſhall ſhew the ſources of its improvement, and the characters of Taſte in its moſt perfect ſtate. I ſhall then examine the various fluctuations to which it is liable, and inquire whether there be any ſtandard to which we

LECT. II. can bring the different taſtes of men, in order to diſtinguiſh the corrupted from the true.

TASTE may be defined, "The power of receiving "pleaſure from the beauties of nature and of "art." The firſt queſtion that occurs concerning it is, whether it is to be conſidered as an internal ſenſe, or as an exertion of reaſon? Reaſon is a very general term; but if we underſtand by it that power of the mind which in ſpeculative matters diſcovers truth, and in practical matters judges of the fitneſs of means to an end, I apprehend the queſtion may be eaſily anſwered. For nothing can be more clear, than that Taſte is not reſolvable into any ſuch operation of Reaſon. It is not merely through a diſcovery of the underſtanding, or a deduction of argument, that the mind receives pleaſure from a beautiful proſpect or a fine poem. Such objects often ſtrike us intuitively, and make a ſtrong impreſſion, when we are unable to aſſign the reaſons of our being pleaſed. They ſometimes ſtrike in the ſame manner the philoſopher and the peaſant; the boy and the man. Hence the faculty by which we reliſh ſuch beauties, ſeems more nearly allied to a feeling of ſenſe, than to a proceſs of the underſtanding; and accordingly, from an external ſenſe it has borrowed its name; that ſenſe by which we receive and diſtinguiſh the pleaſures of food having, in ſeveral languages, given riſe to the word Taſte in the metaphorical meaning under which we now conſider it. However, as, in all ſubjects which regard the operations

operations of the mind, the inaccurate uſe of words is to be carefully avoided, it muſt not be inferred from what I have ſaid that Reaſon is entirely excluded from the exertions of Taſte. Though Taſte, beyond doubt, be ultimately founded on a certain natural and inſtinctive ſenſibility to beauty, yet Reaſon, as I ſhall ſhew hereafter, aſſiſts Taſte in many of its operations, and ſerves to enlarge its power *. LECT. II.

TASTE, in the ſenſe in which I have explained it, is a faculty common in ſome degree to all men. Nothing that belongs to human nature is more general than the reliſh of beauty of one kind or other; of what is orderly, proportioned, grand, harmonious, new, or ſprightly. In children, the rudiments of Taſte diſcover themſelves very early in a thouſand inſtances; in their fondneſs for regular bodies, their admiration of pictures and ſtatues, and imitations of all kinds; and their ſtrong attachment to whatever is new or marvellous. The moſt ignorant peaſants are delighted with ballads and tales, and are ſtruck with the beautiful appearance of nature in the earth and heavens. Even in the deſerts of America, where human nature ſhews itſelf in its moſt uncultivated ſtate, the ſavages have their ornaments of dreſs,

* See Dr. Gerard's Eſſay on Taſte.—D'Alembert's Reflections on the Uſe and Abuſe of Philoſophy in Matters which relate to Taſte.—Reflections Critiques ſur la Poeſie et ſur la Peinture, tome ii. ch. 22—31.—Elements of Criticiſm, c. 25.—Mr. Hume's Eſſay on the Standard of Taſte.—Introduction to the Eſſay on the Sublime and Beautiful.

LECT. II.

their war and their death ſongs, their harangues, and their orators. We muſt, therefore, conclude the principles of Taſte to be deeply founded in the human mind. It is no leſs eſſential to man to have ſome diſcernment of beauty, than it is to poſſeſs the attributes of reaſon and of ſpeech *.

BUT although none be wholly devoid of this faculty, yet the degrees in which it is poſſeſſed are

* On the ſubject of Taſte, conſidered as a power or faculty of the mind, much leſs is to be found among the ancient than among the modern rhetorical and critical writers. The following remarkable paſſage in Cicero ſerves however to ſhew, that his ideas on this ſubject agree perfectly with what has been ſaid above. He is ſpeaking of the beauties of ſtyle and numbers. "Illud autem nequis admiretur quonam modo hæc vulgus imperitorum in audiendo, notet; cum in omni genere, tum in hoc ipſo, magna quædam eſt vis, incredibiliſque naturæ. Omnes enim tacito quodam ſenſu, ſine ulla arte aut ratione, quæ ſint in artibus de rationibus recta et prava dijudicant: idque cum faciunt in picturis, et in ſignis, et in aliis operibus, ad quorum intelligentiam a natura minus habent inſtrumenti, tum multo oſtendunt magis in verborum, numerorum, vocumque judicio; quod ea ſunt in communibus infixa ſenſibus; neque earum rerum quenquam funditus naturæ voluit eſſe expertem." Cic. de Orat. lib. iii. cap. 50. edit. Gruteri. ——Quintilian ſeems to include Taſte (for which, in the ſenſe which we now give to that word, the ancients appear to have had no diſtinct name) under what he calls judicium. "Locus de judicio, meâ quidem opinione adeo partibus hujus operis omnibus connectus ac miſtus eſt, ut ne a ſententiis quidem aut verbis ſaltem ſingulis poſſit ſeparari, nec magis arte traditur quam guſtus aut odor.—Ut contraria vitemus et communia, ne quid in eloquendo corruptum obſcurumque ſit, referatur oportet ad ſenſus qui non docentur." Inſtitut. lib. vi. cap. 3. edit. Obrechti.

widely

widely different. In ſome men only the feeble glimmerings of Taſte appear; the beauties which they reliſh are of the coarſeſt kind; and of theſe they have but a weak and confuſed impreſſion: while in others, Taſte riſes to an acute diſcernment, and a lively enjoyment of the moſt refined beauties. In general we may obſerve, that in the powers and pleaſures of Taſte, there is a more remarkable inequality among men, than is uſually found, in point of common ſenſe, reaſon and judgment. The conſtitution of our nature in this, as in all other reſpects, diſcovers admirable wiſdom. In the diſtribution of thoſe talents which are neceſſary for man's well-being, Nature hath made leſs diſtinction among her children. But in the diſtribution of thoſe which belong only to the ornamental part of life, ſhe hath beſtowed her favours with more frugality. She hath both ſown the ſeeds more ſparingly, and rendered a higher culture requiſite for bringing them to perfection. LECT. II.

THIS inequality of Taſte among men is owing, without doubt, in part, to the different frame of their natures; to nicer organs, and finer internal powers, with which ſome are endowed beyond others. But, if it be owing in part to nature, it is owing to education and culture ſtill more. The illuſtration of this leads to my next remark on this ſubject, that taſte is a moſt improveable faculty, if there be any ſuch in human nature; a remark which gives great encouragement to ſuch a courſe of ſtudy as we are now propoſing to purſue. Of the

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truth of this aſſertion we may eaſily be convinced, by only reflecting on that immenſe ſuperiority which education and improvement give to civilized above barbarous nations, in refinement of Taſte; and on the ſuperiority which they give in the ſame nation to thoſe who have ſtudied the liberal arts, above the rude and untaught vulgar. The difference is ſo great, that there is perhaps no one particular in which theſe two claſſes of men are ſo far removed from each other, as in reſpect of the powers and the pleaſures of Taſte: and aſſuredly for this difference no other general cauſe can be aſſigned but culture and education.—I ſhall now proceed to ſhew what the means are by which Taſte becomes ſo remarkably ſuſceptible of cultivation and progreſs.

REFLECT firſt upon that great law of our nature, that exerciſe is the chief ſource of improvement in all our faculties. This holds both in our bodily, and in our mental powers. It holds even in our external ſenſes; although theſe be leſs the ſubject of cultivation than any of our other faculties. We ſee how acute the ſenſes become in perſons whoſe trade or buſineſs leads to nice exertions of them. Touch, for inſtance, becomes infinitely more exquiſite in men whoſe employment requires them to examine the poliſh of bodies, than it is in others. They who deal in microſcopical obſervations, or are accuſtomed to engrave on precious ſtones, acquire ſurpriſing accuracy of ſight in diſcerning the minuteſt objects; and practice in attending

tending to different flavours and taſtes of liquors, wonderfully improves the power of diſtinguiſhing them, and of tracing their compoſition. Placing internal Taſte therefore on the footing of a ſimple ſenſe, it cannot be doubted that frequent exerciſe and curious attention to its proper objects, muſt greatly heighten its power. Of this we have one clear proof in that part of Taſte which is called an ear for muſic. Experience every day ſhews, that nothing is more improveable. Only the ſimpleſt and plaineſt compoſitions are reliſhed at firſt; uſe and practice extend our pleaſure; teach us to reliſh finer melody, and by degrees enable us to enter into the intricate and compounded pleaſures of harmony. So an eye for the beauties of painting is never all at once acquired. It is gradually formed by being converſant among pictures, and ſtudying the works of the beſt maſters. SECT. II.

PRECISELY in the ſame manner, with reſpect to the beauty of compoſition and diſcourſe, attention to the moſt approved models, ſtudy of the beſt authors, compariſons of lower and higher degrees of the ſame beauties, operate towards the refinement of Taſte. When one is only beginning his acquaintance with works of genius, the ſentiment which attends them is obſcure and confuſed. He cannot point out the ſeveral excellencies or blemiſhes of a performance which he peruſes; he is at a loſs on what to reſt his judgment; all that can be expected is, that he ſhould tell in general whether he be pleaſed or not. But allow him more

SECT. II. experience in works of this kind, and his Taſte becomes by degrees more exact and enlightened. He begins to perceive not only the character of the whole, but the beauties and defects of each part; and is able to deſcribe the peculiar qualities which he praiſes or blames. The miſt is diſſipated which ſeemed formerly to hang over the object; and he can at length pronounce firmly, and without heſitation, concerning it. Thus in Taſte, conſidered as mere ſenſibility, exerciſe opens a great ſource of improvement.

BUT although Taſte be ultimately founded on ſenſibility, it muſt not be conſidered as inſtinctive ſenſibility alone. Reaſon and good ſenſe, as I before hinted, have ſo extenſive an influence on all the operations and deciſions of Taſte, that a thorough good Taſte may well be conſidered as a power compounded of natural ſenſibility to beauty, and of improved underſtanding. In order to be ſatisfied of this, let us obſerve, that the greater part of the productions of genius are no other than imitations of nature; repreſentations of the characters, actions, or manners of men. The pleaſure we receive from ſuch imitations or repreſentations is founded on mere Taſte; but to judge whether they be properly executed, belongs to the underſtanding, which compares the copy with the original.

IN reading, for inſtance, ſuch a poem as the Æneid, a great part of our pleaſure ariſes from the plan

plan or ſtory being well conducted, and all the parts joined together with probability and due connection; from the characters being taken from nature, the ſentiments being ſuited to the characters, and the ſtyle to the ſentiments. The pleaſure which ariſes from a poem ſo conducted, is felt or enjoyed by Taſte as an internal ſenſe; but the diſcovery of this conduct in the poem is owing to reaſon; and the more that reaſon enables us to diſcover ſuch propriety in the conduct, the greater will be our pleaſure. We are pleaſed, through our natural ſenſe of beauty. Reaſon ſhews us why, and upon what grounds, we are pleaſed. Wherever, in works of Taſte, any reſemblance to nature is aimed at; wherever there is any reference of parts to a whole; or of means to an end, as there is indeed in almoſt every writing and diſcourſe; there the underſtanding muſt always have a great part to act. SECT. II.

Here then is a wide field for reaſon's exerting its powers in relation to the objects of Taſte, particularly with reſpect to compoſition, and works of genius; and hence ariſes a ſecond and a very conſiderable ſource of the improvement of Taſte, from the application of reaſon and good ſenſe to ſuch productions of genius. Spurious beauties, ſuch as unnatural characters, forced ſentiments, affected ſtyle, may pleaſe for a little; but they pleaſe only becauſe their oppoſition to nature and to good ſenſe has not been examined, or attended to.

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to. Once ſhew how nature might have been more juſtly imitated or repreſented; how the writer might have managed his ſubject to greater advantage; the illuſion will preſently be diſſipated, and theſe falſe beauties will pleaſe no more.

FROM theſe two ſources then, firſt, the frequent exerciſe of Taſte, and next the application of good ſenſe and reaſon to the objects of Taſte, Taſte as a power of the mind receives its improvement. In its perfect ſtate it is undoubtedly the reſult both of nature and of art. It ſuppoſes our natural ſenſe of beauty to be refined by frequent attention to the moſt beautiful objects, and at the ſame time to be guided and improved by the light of the underſtanding.

I MUST be allowed to add, that as a ſound head, ſo likewiſe a good heart, is a very material requiſite to juſt Taſte. The moral beauties are not only in themſelves ſuperior to all others, but they exert an influence, either more near or more remote, on a great variety of other objects of Taſte. Wherever the affections, characters, or actions of men are concerned (and theſe certainly afford the nobleſt ſubjects to genius), there can be neither any juſt or affecting deſcription of them, nor any thorough feeling of the beauty of that deſcription, without our poſſeſſing the virtuous affections. He whoſe heart is indelicate or hard, he who has no admiration of what is truly noble or praiſeworthy, nor

nor the proper ſympathetic ſenſe of what is ſoft and tender, muſt have a very imperfect reliſh of the higheſt beauties of eloquence and poetry. SECT. II.

THE characters of Taſte, when brought to its moſt improved ſtate, are all reducible to two, Delicacy and Correctneſs.

DELICACY of Taſte reſpects principally the perfection of that natural ſenſibility on which Taſte is founded. It implies thoſe finer organs or powers which enable us to diſcover beauties that lie hid from a vulgar eye. One may have ſtrong ſenſibility, and yet be deficient in delicate Taſte. He may be deeply impreſſed by ſuch beauties as he perceives; but he perceives only what is in ſome degree coarſe, what is bold and palpable; while chaſter and ſimpler ornaments eſcape his notice. In this ſtate Taſte generally exiſts among rude and unrefined nations. But a perſon of delicate taſte both feels ſtrongly and feels accurately. He ſees diſtinctions and differences where others ſee none; the moſt latent beauty does not eſcape him, and he is ſenſible of the ſmalleſt blemiſh. Delicacy of Taſte is judged of by the ſame marks that we uſe in judging of the delicacy of an external ſenſe. As the goodneſs of the palate is not tried by ſtrong flavours, but by a mixture of ingredients, where, notwithſtanding the confuſion, we remain ſenſible of each; in like manner, delicacy of internal Taſte appears, by a quick and lively ſenſibility to its fineſt, moſt compounded, or moſt latent objects.

COR-

SECT. II.

CORRECTNESS of Taſte reſpects chiefly the improvement which that faculty receives through its connection with the underſtanding. A man of correct Taſte is one who is never impoſed on by counterfeit beauties; who carries always in his mind that ſtandard of good ſenſe which he employs in judging of every thing. He eſtimates with propriety the comparative merit of the ſeveral beauties which he meets with in any work of genius; refers them to their proper claſſes; aſſigns the principles, as far as they can be traced, whence their power of pleaſing flows; and is pleaſed himſelf preciſely in that degree in which he ought, and no more.

IT is true that theſe two qualities of Taſte, Delicacy and Correctneſs, mutually imply each other. No Taſte can be exquiſitely delicate without being correct; nor can be thoroughly correct without being delicate. But ſtill a predominancy of one or other quality in the mixture is often viſible. The power of Delicacy is chiefly ſeen in diſcerning the true merit of a work; the power of Correctneſs, in rejecting falſe pretenſions to merit. Delicacy leans more to feeling; Correctneſs more to reaſon and judgment. The former is more the gift of nature; the latter, more the product of culture and art. Among the ancient critics, Longinus poſſeſſed moſt Delicacy; Ariſtotle, moſt Correctneſs. Among the moderns, Mr. Addiſon is a high example of delicate Taſte; Dean Swift, had he written on the

the ſubject of criticiſm, would perhaps have afforded the example of a correct one. LECT. II.

HAVING viewed Taſte in its moſt improved and perfect ſtate, I come next to conſider its deviations from that taſte, the fluctuations and changes to which it is liable; and to inquire whether, in the midſt of theſe, there be any means of diſtinguiſhing a true from a corrupted Taſte. This brings us to the moſt difficult part of our taſk. For it muſt be acknowledged, that no principle of the human mind is, in its operations, more fluctuating and capricious than Taſte. Its variations have been ſo great and frequent, as to create a ſuſpicion with ſome, of its being merely arbitrary; grounded on no foundation, aſcertainable by no ſtandard, but wholly dependant on changing fancy; the conſequence of which would be, that all ſtudies or regular inquiries concerning the objects of Taſte were vain. In architecture, the Grecian models were long eſteemed the moſt perfect. In ſucceeding ages, the Gothic architecture alone prevailed, and afterwards the Grecian Taſte revived in all its vigour, and engroſſed the public admiration. In eloquence and poetry, the Aſiatics at no time reliſhed any thing but what was full of ornament, and ſplendid in a degree that we ſhould denominate gawdy; whilſt the Greeks admired only chaſte and ſimple beauties, and deſpiſed the Aſiatic oſtentation. In our own country, how many writings that were greatly extolled two or three centuries ago, are now fallen into entire diſrepute and oblivion? Without going

LECT. II. going back to remote inſtances, how very different is the taſte of poetry which prevails in Great Britain now, from what prevailed there no longer ago than the reign of King Charles II. which the authors too of that time deemed an Auguſtan age: when nothing was in vogue but an affected brilliancy of wit; when the ſimple majeſty of Milton was overlooked, and Paradiſe Loſt almoſt entirely unknown; when Cowley's laboured and unnatural conceits were admired as the very quinteſſence of genius; Waller's gay ſprightlineſs was miſtaken for the tender ſpirit of Love poetry; and ſuch writers as Suckling and Etheridge were held in eſteem for dramatic compoſition.

THE queſtion is, what concluſion we are to form from ſuch inſtances as theſe? Is there any thing that can be called a ſtandard of Taſte, by appealing to which we may diſtinguiſh between a good and a bad Taſte? Or, is there in truth no ſuch diſtinction; and are we to hold that, according to the proverb, there is no diſputing of Taſtes; but that whatever pleaſes is right, for that reaſon, that it does pleaſe? This is the queſtion, and a very nice and ſubtle one it is, which we are now to diſcuſs.

I BEGIN by obſerving, that if there be no ſuch thing as any ſtandard of Taſte, this conſequence muſt immediately follow, that all Taſtes are equally good; a poſition which, though it may paſs unnoticed in ſlight matters, and when we ſpeak of the

the leſſer differences among the Taſtes of men, yet when we apply it to the extremes, preſently ſhews its abſurdity. For is there any one who will ſeriouſly maintain that the Taſte of a Hottentot or a Laplander is as delicate and as correct as that of a Longinus or an Addiſon? or that he can be charged with no defect or incapacity, who thinks a common news-writer as excellent an Hiſtorian as Tacitus? As it would be held downright extravagance to talk in this manner, we are led unavoidably to this concluſion, that there is ſome foundation for the preference of one man's Taſte to that of another; or that there is a good and a bad, a right and a wrong in Taſte, as in other things. LECT. II.

But to prevent miſtakes on this ſubject, it is neceſſary to obſerve next, that the diverſity of Taſtes which prevails among mankind, does not in every caſe infer corruption of Taſte, or oblige us to ſeek for ſome ſtandard in order to determine who are in the right. The Taſtes of men may differ very conſiderably as to their object, and yet none of them be wrong. One man reliſhes Poetry moſt; another takes pleaſure in nothing but Hiſtory. One prefers Comedy; another, Tragedy. One admires the ſimple; another the ornamented ſtyle. The young are amuſed with gay and ſprightly compoſitions. The elderly are more entertained with thoſe of a graver caſt. Some nations delight in bold pictures of manners, and ſtrong repreſentations of paſſion. Others incline to more correct and regular elegance both in

LECT. II. deſcription and ſentiment. Though all differ, yet all pitch upon ſome one beauty which peculiarly ſuits their turn of mind; and therefore no one has a title to condemn the reſt. It is not in matters of Taſte, as in queſtions of mere reaſon, where there is but one concluſion that can be true, and all the reſt are erroneous. Truth, which is the object of reaſon, is one; Beauty, which is the object of Taſte, is manifold. Taſte, therefore, admits of latitude and diverſity of objects, in ſufficient conſiſtency with goodneſs or juſtneſs of Taſte.

But then, to explain this matter thoroughly, I muſt obſerve farther, that this admiſſible diverſity of Taſtes can only have place where the objects of Taſte are different. Where it is with reſpect to the ſame object that men diſagree, when one condemns that as ugly, which another admires as highly beautiful; then it is no longer diverſity, but direct oppoſition of Taſte that takes place; and therefore one muſt be in the right, and another in the wrong, unleſs that abſurd paradox were allowed to hold, that all Taſtes are equally good and true. One man prefers Virgil to Homer. Suppoſe that I, on the other hand, admire Homer more than Virgil. I have as yet no reaſon to ſay that our Taſtes are contradictory. The other perſon is more ſtruck with the elegance and tenderneſs which are the characteriſtics of Virgil: I, with the ſimplicity and fire of Homer. As long as neither of us deny that both Homer and Virgil have great beauties, our difference falls within the compaſs of that

diverſity of Taſtes, which I have ſhewed to be natural and allowable. But if the other man ſhall aſſert that Homer has no beauties whatever; that he holds him to be a dull and ſpiritleſs writer, and that he would as ſoon peruſe any old legend of Knight-errantry as the Iliad; then I exclaim, that my antagoniſt either is void of all Taſte, or that his Taſte is corrupted in a miſerable degree; and I appeal to whatever I think the ſtandard of Taſte, to ſhew him that he is in the wrong.

WHAT that ſtandard is, to which, in ſuch oppoſition of Taſtes, we are obliged to have recourſe, remains to be traced. A ſtandard properly ſignifies, that which is of ſuch undoubted authority as to be the teſt of other things of the ſame kind. Thus a ſtandard weight or meaſure is that which is appointed by law to regulate all other meaſures and weights. Thus the court is ſaid to be the ſtandard of good breeding; and the ſcripture, of theological truth.

WHEN we ſay that nature is the ſtandard of Taſte, we lay down a principle very true and juſt, as far as it can be applied. There is no doubt, that in all caſes where an imitation is intended of ſome object that exiſts in nature, as in repreſenting human characters or actions, conformity to nature affords a full and diſtinct criterion of what is truly beautiful. Reaſon hath in ſuch caſes full ſcope for exerting its authority, for approving or condemning;

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ing; by comparing the copy with the original. But there are innumerable cases in which this rule cannot be at all applied; and conformity to nature, is an expression frequently used, without any distinct or determinate meaning. We must therefore search for somewhat that can be rendered more clear and precise, to be the standard of Taste.

TASTE, as I before explained it, is ultimately founded on an internal sense of beauty, which is natural to men, and which, in its application to particular objects, is capable of being guided and enlightened by reason. Now, were there any one person who possessed in full perfection all the powers of human nature, whose internal senses were in every instance exquisite and just, and whose reason was unerring and sure, the determinations of such a person concerning beauty, would, beyond doubt, be a perfect standard for the Taste of all others. Wherever their Taste differed from his, it could be imputed only to some imperfection in their natural powers. But as there is no such living standard, no one person to whom all mankind will allow such submission to be due, what is there of sufficient authority to be the standard of the various and opposite Tastes of men; most certainly there is nothing but the Taste, as far as it can be gathered, of human nature. That which men concur the most in admiring must be held to be beautiful. His Taste must be esteemed just and true,

true, which coincides with the general ſentiments of men. In this ſtandard we muſt reſt. To the ſenſe of mankind the ultimate appeal muſt ever lie, in all works of Taſte. If any one ſhould maintain that ſugar was bitter and tobacco was ſweet, no reaſonings could avail to prove it. The Taſte of ſuch a perſon would infallibly be held to be diſeaſed, merely becauſe it differed ſo widely from the Taſte of the ſpecies to which he belongs. In like manner, with regard to the objects of ſentiment or internal Taſte, the common feelings of men carry the ſame authority, and have a title to regulate the Taſte of every individual. LECT. II.

But have we then, it will be ſaid, no other criterion of what is beautiful than the approbation of the majority? Muſt we collect the voices of others, before we form any judgment for ourſelves, of what deſerves applauſe in Eloquence or Poetry? By no means; there are principles of reaſon and ſound judgment which can be applied to matters of Taſte as well as to the ſubjects of ſcience and philoſophy. He who admires or cenſures any work of genius, is always ready, if his Taſte be in any degree improved, to aſſign ſome reaſons for his deciſion. He appeals to principles, and points out the grounds on which he proceeds. Taſte is a ſort of compound power, in which the light of the underſtanding always mingles, more or leſs, with the feelings of ſentiment.

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But, though reaſon can carry us a certain length in judging concerning works of Taſte, it is not to be forgotten that the ultimate concluſions to which our reaſonings lead, refer at laſt to ſenſe and perception. We may ſpeculate and argue concerning propriety of conduct in a Tragedy, or an Epic Poem. Juſt reaſonings on the ſubject will correct the caprice of unenlightened Taſte, and eſtabliſh principles for judging of what deſerves praiſe. But, at the ſame time, theſe reaſonings appeal always, in the laſt reſort, to feeling. The foundation upon which they reſt, is what has been found from experience to pleaſe mankind univerſally. Upon this ground we prefer a ſimple and natural, to an artificial and affected ſtyle; a regular and well-connected ſtory, to looſe and ſcattered narratives; a cataſtrophe which is tender and pathetic, to one which leaves us unmoved. It is from conſulting our own imagination and heart, and from attending to the feelings of others, that any principles are formed which acquire authority in matters of Taſte *.

When

* The difference between the authors who found the ſtandard of Taſte upon the common feelings of human nature aſcertained by general approbation, and thoſe who found it upon eſtabliſhed principles which can be aſcertained by reaſon, is more an apparent than a real difference. Like many other literary controverſies, it turns chiefly on modes of expreſſion. For they who lay the greateſt ſtreſs on ſentiment and feeling, make no ſcruple of applying argument and reaſon to matters of Taſte. They

WHEN we refer to the concurring ſentiments of men as the ultimate teſt of what is to be accounted beautiful in the arts, this is to be always underſtood of men placed in ſuch ſituations as are favourable to the proper exertions of Taſte. Every one muſt perceive that among rude and uncivilized nations, and during the ages of ignorance and darkneſs, any looſe notions that are entertained concerning ſuch ſubjects carry no authority. In thoſe ſtates of ſociety, Taſte has no materials on which to operate. It is either totally ſuppreſſed, or appears in its loweſt and moſt imperfect form. We refer to the ſentiments of mankind in poliſhed and flouriſhing nations; when arts are cultivated and manners refined; when works of genius are ſubjected to free diſcuſſion, and Taſte is improved by Science and Philoſophy. SECT. II.

They appeal, like other writers, to eſtabliſhed principles, in judging of the excellencies of Eloquence or Poetry; and plainly ſhew, that the general approbation to which they ultimately recur, is an approbation reſulting from diſcuſſion as well as from ſentiment. They, on the other hand, who, in order to vindicate Taſte from any ſuſpicion of being arbitrary, maintain that it is aſcertainable by the ſtandard of Reaſon, admit nevertheleſs, that what pleaſes univerſally, muſt on that account be held to be truly beautiful; and that no rules or concluſions concerning objects of Taſte, can have any juſt authority, if they be found to contradict the general ſentiments of men. Theſe two ſyſtems, therefore, differ in reality very little from one another. Sentiment and Reaſon enter into both; and by allowing to each of theſe powers its due place, both ſyſtems may be rendered conſiſtent. Accordingly, it is in this light that I have endeavoured to place the ſubject.

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EVEN among nations, at such a period of society, I admit, that accidental causes may occasionally warp the proper operations of Taste; sometimes the state of religion, sometimes the form of government, may for a while pervert it; a licentious court may introduce a Taste for false ornaments, and dissolute writings. The usage of one admired genius may procure approbation for his faults, and even render them fashionable. Sometimes envy may have power to bear down, for a little, productions of great merit; while popular humour, or party spirit, may, at other times, exalt to a high, though short-lived, reputation, what little deserved it. But though such casual circumstances give the appearance of caprice to the judgments of Taste, that appearance is easily corrected. In the course of time, the genuine taste of human nature never fails to disclose itself, and to gain the ascendant over any fantastic and corrupted modes of Taste which may chance to have been introduced. These may have currency for a while, and mislead superficial judges; but being subjected to examination, by degrees they pass away; while that alone remains which is founded on sound reason, and the native feelings of men.

I BY no means pretend, that there is any standard of Taste, to which, in every particular instance, we can resort for clear and immediate determination. Where, indeed, is such a standard to be found for deciding any of those great controversies in reason and philosophy,

philoſophy, which perpetually divide mankind? In the preſent caſe, there was plainly no occaſion for any ſuch ſtrict and abſolute proviſion to be made. In order to judge of what is morally good or evil, of what man ought, or ought not in duty to do, it was fit that the means of clear and preciſe determination ſhould be afforded us. But to aſcertain in every caſe with the utmoſt exactneſs what is beautiful or elegant, was not at all neceſſary to the happineſs of man. And therefore ſome diverſity in feeling was here allowed to take place; and room was left for diſcuſſion and debate, concerning the degree of approbation to which any work of genius is entitled. SECT. II.

THE concluſion, which it is ſufficient for us to reſt upon, is, that Taſte, is far from being an arbitrary principle, which is ſubject to the fancy of every individual, and which admits of no criterion for determining whether it be falſe or true. Its foundation is the ſame in all human minds. It is built upon ſentiments and perceptions which belong to our nature; and which, in general, operate with the ſame uniformity as our other intellectual principles. When theſe ſentiments are perverted by ignorance and prejudice, they are capable of being rectified by reaſon. Their ſound and natural ſtate is ultimately determined, by comparing them with the general Taſte of mankind. Let men declaim as much as they pleaſe, concerning the caprice and the uncertainty of Taſte, it is found

SECT. II. by experience, that there are beauties, which, if they be diſplayed in a proper light, have power to command laſting and general admiration. In every compoſition, what intereſts the imagination and touches the heart, pleaſes all ages and all nations. There is a certain ſtring to which, when properly ſtruck, the human heart is ſo made as to anſwer.

HENCE the univerſal teſtimony which the moſt improved nations of the earth have conſpired, throughout a long tract of ages, to give to ſome few works of genius; ſuch as the Iliad of Homer, and the Æneid of Virgil. Hence the authority which ſuch works have acquired as ſtandards, in ſome degree, of poetical compoſition; ſince from them we are enabled to collect what the ſenſe of mankind is, concerning thoſe beauties which give them the higheſt pleaſure, and which therefore poetry ought to exhibit. Authority or prejudice may, in one age or country, give a temporary reputation to an indifferent poet, or a bad artiſt: but when foreigners, or when poſterity, examine his works, his faults are diſcerned, and the genuine Taſte of human nature appears. "Opinionum "commenta delet dies; naturæ judicia confirmat." Time overthrows the illuſions of opinion, but eſtabliſhes the deciſions of nature.

LECTURE III.

CRITICISM.—GENIUS.—PLEASURES OF TASTE. —SUBLIMITY IN OBJECTS.

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TASTE, Criticiſm, and Genius, are words currently employed, without diſtinct ideas annexed to them. In beginning a courſe of Lectures where ſuch words muſt often occur, it is neceſſary to aſcertain their meaning with ſome preciſion. Having in the laſt Lecture treated of Taſte, I proceed to explain the nature and foundation of Criticiſm. True Criticiſm is the application of Taſte and of good ſenſe to the ſeveral fine arts. The object which it propoſes is, to diſtinguiſh what is beautiful and what is faulty in every performance; from particular inſtances to aſcend to general principles; and ſo to form rules or concluſions concerning the ſeveral kinds of beauty in works of Genius.

THE rules of Criticiſm are not formed by any induction, *à priori*, as it is called; that is, they are

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are not formed by a train of abſtract reaſoning, independent of facts and obſervations. Criticiſm is an art founded wholly on experience; on the obſervations of ſuch beauties as have come neareſt to the ſtandard which I before eſtabliſhed; that is, of ſuch beauties as have been found to pleaſe mankind moſt generally. For example; Ariſtotle's rules concerning the unity of action in dramatic and epic compoſition, were not rules firſt diſcovered by logical reaſoning, and then applied to poetry; but they were drawn from the practice of Homer and Sophocles; they were founded upon obſerving the ſuperior pleaſure which we receive from the relation of an action which is one and entire, beyond what we receive from the relation of ſcattered and unconnected facts. Such obſervations taking their riſe at firſt from feeling and experience, were found on examination to be ſo conſonant to reaſon, and to the principles of human nature, as to paſs into eſtabliſhed rules, and to be conveniently applied for judging of the excellency of any performance. This is the moſt natural account of the origin of Criticiſm.

A MASTERLY genius, it is true, will of himſelf, untaught, compoſe in ſuch a manner as ſhall be agreeable to the moſt material rules of Criticiſm; for as theſe rules are founded in nature, nature will often ſuggeſt them in practice. Homer, it is more than probable, was acquainted with no ſyſtems of the art of poetry. Guided by genius alone,

alone, he compoſed in verſe a regular ſtory, which all poſterity has admired. But this is no argument againſt the uſefulneſs of criticiſm as an art. For as no human genius is perfect, there is no writer but may receive aſſiſtance from critical obſervations upon the beauties and faults of thoſe who have gone before him. No obſervations or rules can indeed ſupply the defect of genius, or inſpire it where it is wanting. But they may often direct it into its proper channel; they may correct its extravagancies, and point out to it the moſt juſt and proper imitation of nature. Critical rules are deſigned chiefly to ſhew the faults that ought to be avoided. To nature we muſt be indebted for the production of eminent beauties. LECT. III.

FROM what has been ſaid, we are enabled to form a judgment concerning thoſe complaints which it has long been faſhionable for petty authors to make againſt Critics and Criticiſm. Critics have been repreſented as the great abridgers of the native liberty of genius; as the impoſers of unnatural ſhackles and bonds upon writers, from whoſe cruel perſecution they muſt fly to the Public, and implore its protection. Such ſupplicatory prefaces are not calculated to give very favourable ideas of the genius of the author. For every good writer will be pleaſed to have his work examined by the principles of ſound underſtanding, and true Taſte. The declamations againſt Criticiſm commonly proceed upon this ſuppoſition, that Critics

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LECT. III. are ſuch as judge by rule, not by feeling; which is ſo far from being true, that they who judge after this manner are Pedants, not Critics. For all the rules of genuine Criticiſm I have ſhewn to be ultimately founded on feeling; and Taſte and Feeling are neceſſary to guide us in the application of theſe rules to every particular inſtance. As there is nothing in which all ſorts of perſons more readily affect to be judges than in works of Taſte, there is no doubt that the number of incompetent Critics will always be great. But this affords no more foundation for a general invective againſt Criticiſm, than the number of bad philoſophers or reaſoners affords againſt reaſon and philoſophy.

An objection more plauſible may be formed againſt Criticiſm, from the applauſe that ſome performances have received from the Public, which, when accurately conſidered, are found to contradict the rules eſtabliſhed by Criticiſm. Now, according to the principles laid down in the laſt Lecture, the Public is the ſupreme judge to whom the laſt appeal muſt be made in every work of Taſte; as the ſtandard of Taſte is founded on the ſentiments that are natural and common to all men. But with reſpect to this, we are to obſerve, that the ſenſe of the Public is often too haſtily judged of. The genuine public Taſte does not always appear in the firſt applauſe given upon the publication of any new work. There are both a great vulgar and a ſmall, apt to be catched and dazzled by

by very ſuperficial beauties, the admiration of which in a little time paſſes away: and ſometimes a writer may acquire great temporary reputation merely by his compliance with the paſſions or prejudices, with the party-ſpirit or ſuperſtitious notions, that may chance to rule for a time almoſt a whole nation. In ſuch caſes, though the Public may ſeem to praiſe, true Criticiſm may with reaſon condemn; and it will in progreſs of time gain the aſcendant: for the judgment of true Criticiſm, and the voice of the Public, when once become unprejudiced and diſpaſſionate, will ever coincide at laſt. LECT. III.

INSTANCES I admit there are of ſome works, that contain groſs tranſgreſſions of the laws of Criticiſm, acquiring, nevertheleſs, a general, and even a laſting admiration. Such are the plays of Shakeſpeare, which, conſidered as dramatic poems, are irregular in the higheſt degree. But then we are to remark, that they have gained the public admiration, not by their being irregular, not by their tranſgreſſions of the rules of art, but in ſpite of ſuch tranſgreſſions. They poſſeſs other beauties which are conformable to juſt rules; and the force of theſe beauties has been ſo great as to overpower all cenſure, and to give the Public a degree of ſatisfaction ſuperior to the diſguſt ariſing from their blemiſhes. Shakeſpeare pleaſes, not by his bringing the tranſactions of many years into one play; not by his groteſque mixtures of Tragedy and

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I PROCEED next to explain the meaning of another term, which there will be frequent occaſion to employ in theſe Lectures; that is, *Genius*.

TASTE and Genius are two words frequently joined together; and therefore, by inaccurate thinkers, confounded. They ſignify however two quite different things. The difference between them can be clearly pointed out; and it is of importance to remember it. Taſte conſiſts in the power of judging; Genius, in the power of executing. One may have a conſiderable degree of Taſte in Poetry, Eloquence, or any of the fine arts, who has little or hardly any Genius for compoſition or execution in any of theſe arts; but Genius cannot be found without including Taſte alſo. Genius, therefore, deſerves to be conſidered as a higher power of the mind than Taſte. Genius always imports ſomething inventive or creative;

tive; which does not reſt in mere ſenſibility to beauty where it is perceived, but which can, moreover, produce new beauties, and exhibit them in ſuch a manner as ſtrongly to impreſs the minds of others. Refined Taſte forms a good critic; but Genius is farther neceſſary to form the poet, or the orator. LECT. III.

IT is proper alſo to obſerve, that Genius is a word, which, in common acceptation, extends much farther than to the objects of Taſte. It is uſed to ſignify that talent or aptitude which we receive from nature, for excelling in any one thing whatever. Thus we ſpeak of a Genius for mathematics, as well as a Genius for poetry; of a Genius for war, for politics, or for any mechanical employment.

THIS talent or aptitude for excelling in ſome one particular, is, I have ſaid, what we receive from nature. By art and ſtudy, no doubt, it may be greatly improved; but by them alone it cannot be acquired. As Genius is a higher faculty than Taſte, it is ever, according to the uſual frugality of nature, more limited in the ſphere of its operations. It is not uncommon to meet with perſons who have an excellent Taſte in ſeveral of the polite arts, ſuch as muſic, poetry, painting, and eloquence, all together: but, to find one who is an excellent performer in all theſe arts, is much more rare; or rather, indeed, ſuch an one is not to be

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looked for. A ſort of Univerſal Genius, or one who is equally and indifferently turned towards ſeveral different profeſſions and arts, is not likely to excel in any. Although there may be ſome few exceptions, yet in general it holds, that when the bent of the mind is wholly directed towards ſome one object, excluſive, in a manner, of others, there is the faireſt proſpect of eminence in that, whatever it be. The rays muſt converge to a point, in order to glow intenſely. This remark I here chuſe to make, on account of its great importance to young people; in leading them to examine with care, and to purſue with ardour, the current and pointing of nature towards thoſe exertions of Genius in which they are moſt likely to excel.

A GENIUS for any of the fine arts, as I before obſerved, always ſuppoſes Taſte; and it is clear, that the improvement of Taſte will ſerve both to forward and to correct the operations of Genius. In proportion as the taſte of a poet, or orator, becomes more refined with reſpect to the beauties of compoſition, it will certainly aſſiſt him to produce the more finiſhed beauties in his work. Genius, however, in a Poet, or Orator, may ſometimes exiſt in a higher degree than Taſte; that is, Genius may be bold and ſtrong, when Taſte is neither very delicate, nor very correct. This is often the caſe in the infancy of arts: a period when Genius frequently exerts itſelf with great vigour and executes with

with much warmth; while Taſte, which requires experience, and improves by ſlower degrees, hath not yet attained to its full growth. Homer and Shakeſpeare are proofs of what I now aſſert; in whoſe admirable writings are found inſtances of rudeneſs and indelicacy, which the more refined Taſte of later writers, who had far inferior Genius to them, would have taught them to avoid. As all human perfection is limited, this may very probably be the law of our nature, that it is not given to one man to execute with vigour and fire, and, at the ſame time, to attend to all the leſſer and more refined graces that belong to the exact perfection of his work: while, on the other hand, a thorough Taſte for thoſe inferior graces is, for the moſt part, accompanied with a diminution of ſublimity and force. LECT. III.

HAVING thus explained the nature of Taſte, the nature and importance of Criticiſm, and the diſtinction between Taſte and Genius; I am now to conſider the ſources of the Pleaſures of Taſte. Here opens a very extenſive field; no leſs than all the pleaſures of the imagination, as they are commonly called, whether afforded us by natural objects, or by the imitations and deſcriptions of them. But it is not neceſſary to the purpoſe of my Lectures that all theſe ſhould be examined fully; the pleaſure which we receive from diſcourſe, or writing, being the main object of them. All that I propoſe is to give ſome openings into the Plea-

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ſures of Taſte in general; and to inſiſt more particularly upon Sublimity and Beauty.

We are far from having yet attained to any ſyſtem concerning this ſubject. Mr. Addiſon was the firſt who attempted a regular inquiry, in his Eſſay on the Pleaſures of the Imagination, publiſhed in the ſixth volume of the Spectator. He has reduced theſe Pleaſures under three heads; Beauty, Grandeur, and Novelty. His ſpeculations on this ſubject, if not exceedingly profound, are, however, very beautiful and entertaining; and he has the merit of having opened a track, which was before unbeaten. The advances made ſince his time in this curious part of philoſophical Criticiſm, are not very conſiderable; though ſome ingenious writers have purſued the ſubject. This is owing, doubtleſs, to that thinneſs and ſubtilty which are found to be properties of all the feelings of Taſte. They are engaging objects; but when we would lay firm hold of them, and ſubject them to a regular diſcuſſion, they are always ready to eſude our graſp. It is difficult to make a full enumeration of the ſeveral objects that give pleaſure to Taſte; it is more difficult to define all thoſe which have been diſcovered, and to reduce them under proper claſſes; and, when we would go farther, and inveſtigate the efficient cauſes of the pleaſure which we receive from ſuch objects, here, above all, we find ourſelves at a loſs. For inſtance; we all learn by experience, that certain figures of

bodies appear to us more beautiful than others. On inquiring farther, we find that the regularity of ſome figures, and the graceful variety of others are the foundation of the beauty which we diſcern in them; but when we attempt to go a ſtep beyond this, and inquire what is the cauſe of regularity and variety producing in our minds the ſenſation of Beauty, any reaſon we can aſſign is extremely imperfect. Theſe firſt principles of internal ſenſation nature ſeems to have covered with an impenetrable veil. LECT. III.

It is ſome comfort, however, that although the efficient cauſe be obſcure, the final cauſe of thoſe ſenſations lies in many caſes more open: and, in entering on this ſubject, we cannot avoid taking notice of the ſtrong impreſſion which the powers of Taſte and Imagination are calculated to give us of the benignity of our Creator. By endowing us with ſuch powers, he hath widely enlarged the ſphere of the pleaſures of human life; and thoſe too of a kind the moſt pure and innocent. The neceſſary purpoſes of life might have been abundantly anſwered, though our ſenſes of ſeeing and hearing had only ſerved to diſtinguiſh external objects, without conveying to us any of thoſe refined and delicate ſenſations of Beauty and Grandeur, with which we are now ſo much delighted. This additional embelliſhment and glory, which, for promoting our entertainment, the Author of Nature hath poured forth upon his works, is one

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ſtriking teſtimony, among many others, of benevolence and goodneſs. This thought, which Mr. Addiſon firſt ſtarted, Dr. Akenſide, in his Poem on the Pleaſures of the Imagination, has happily purſued.

——— Not content
With every food of life to nouriſh man,
By kind illuſions of the wondering ſenſe,
Thou mak'ſt all nature, Beauty to his eye,
Or Muſic to his ear.———

I SHALL begin with conſidering the Pleaſure which ariſes from Sublimity or Grandeur, of which I propoſe to treat at ſome length; both, as this has a character more preciſe and diſtinctly marked than any other of the Pleaſures of the Imagination, and as it coincides more directly with our main ſubject. For the greater diſtinctneſs I ſhall, firſt, treat of the Grandeur or Sublimity of external objects themſelves, which will employ the reſt of this Lecture; and, afterwards, of the deſcription of ſuch objects, or of what is called the Sublime in Writing, which ſhall be the ſubject of a following Lecture. I diſtinguiſh theſe two things from one another, the Grandeur of the objects themſelves when they are preſented to the eye, and the deſcription of that Grandeur in diſcourſe or writing; though moſt Critics, inaccurately I think, blend them together; and I conſider Grandeur and Sublimity as terms ſynonymous, or nearly ſo. If there be any diſtinction between them, it ariſes from

from Sublimity's expreſſing Grandeur in its higheſt degree *. SECT. III.

It is not eaſy to deſcribe, in words, the preciſe impreſſion which great and ſublime objects make upon us when we behold them, but every one has a conception of it. It produces a ſort of internal elevation and expanſion; it raiſes the mind much above its ordinary ſtate; and fills it with a degree of wonder and aſtoniſhment, which it cannot well expreſs. The emotion is certainly delightful; but it is altogether of the ſerious kind; a degree of awfulneſs and ſolemnity, even approaching to ſeverity, commonly attends it when at its height; very diſtinguiſhable from the more gay and briſk emotion raiſed by beautiful objects.

The ſimpleſt form of external Grandeur appears in the vaſt and boundleſs proſpects preſented to us by nature; ſuch as wide extended plains, to which the eye can ſee no limits; the firmament of Heaven; or the boundleſs expanſe of the Ocean. All vaſtneſs produces the impreſſion of Sublimity. It is to be remarked, however, that ſpace, extended in length, makes not ſo ſtrong an impreſſion as height or depth. Though a boundleſs plain be a grand object, yet a high mountain, to which we

* See a Philoſophical Enquiry into the Origin of our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful. Dr. Gerard on Taſte, Section II. Elements of Criticiſm, Chap. IV.

LECT. III. look up, or an awful precipice or tower whence we look down on the objects which lie below, is ſtill more ſo. The exceſſive Grandeur of the firmament ariſes from its height, joined to its boundleſs extent; and that of the ocean, not from its extent alone, but from the perpetual motion and irreſiſtible force of that maſs of waters. Wherever ſpace is concerned, it is clear, that amplitude or greatneſs of extent, in one dimenſion or other, is neceſſary to Grandeur. Remove all bounds from any object, and you preſently render it ſublime. Hence infinite ſpace, endleſs numbers, and eternal duration, fill the mind with great ideas.

FROM this ſome have imagined, that vaſtneſs, or amplitude of extent, is the foundation of all Sublimity. But I cannot be of this opinion, becauſe many objects appear ſublime which have no relation to ſpace at all. Such, for inſtance, is great loudneſs of ſound. The burſt of thunder or of cannon, the roaring of winds, the ſhouting of multitudes, the ſound of vaſt cataracts of water, are all inconteſtibly grand objects. "I heard the "voice of a great multitude, as the ſound of many "waters and of mighty thunderings, ſaying, "Allelujah." In general we may obſerve, that great power and force exerted, always raiſe ſublime ideas; and perhaps the moſt copious ſource of theſe is derived from this quarter. Hence the grandeur of earthquakes and burning mountains; of great conflagrations; of the ſtormy ocean, and overflowing

flowing waters; of tempeſts of wind; of thunder and lightning; and of all the uncommon violence of the elements. Nothing is more ſublime than mighty power and ſtrength. A ſtream that runs within its banks is a beautiful object; but when it ruſhes down with the impetuoſity and noiſe of a torrent, it preſently becomes a ſublime one. From lions, and other animals of ſtrength, are drawn ſublime compariſons in poets. A race-horſe is looked upon with pleaſure; but it is the war-horſe "whoſe neck is clothed with thunder," that carries grandeur in its idea. The engagement of two great armies, as it is the higheſt exertion of human might, combines a variety of ſources of the Sublime; and has accordingly been always conſidered as one of the moſt ſtriking and magnificent ſpectacles that can either be preſented to the eye, or exhibited to the imagination in deſcription. SECT. III.

For the farther illuſtration of this ſubject, it is proper to remark, that all ideas of the ſolemn and awful kind, and even bordering on the terrible, tend greatly to aſſiſt the ſublime; ſuch as darkneſs, ſolitude, and ſilence. What are the ſcenes of nature that elevate the mind in the higheſt degree, and produce the ſublime ſenſation? Not the gay landſcape, the flowery field, or the flouriſhing city; but the hoary mountain, and the ſolitary lake; the aged foreſt, and the torrent falling over the rock. Hence, too, night-ſcenes are commonly the moſt ſublime. The firmament, when filled with ſtars, ſcattered in ſuch vaſt numbers,

LECT. III. and with ſuch magnificent profuſion, ſtrikes the imagination with a more awful grandeur, than when we view it enlighted with all the ſplendour of the Sun. The deep ſound of a great bell, or the ſtriking of a great clock, are at any time grand; but, when heard amid the ſilence and ſtillneſs of the night, they become doubly ſo. Darkneſs is very commonly applied for adding Sublimity to all our ideas of the Deity. "He maketh darkneſs his "pavillion; he dwelleth in the thick cloud." So Milton;

——— How oft, amidſt
Thick Clouds and dark, does Heaven's all-ruling Sire
Chuſe to reſide, his glory unobſcur'd,
And, with the Majeſty of darkneſs, round
Circles his throne——— Book II. 263.

Obſerve, with how much art Virgil has introduced all thoſe ideas of ſilence, vacuity, and darkneſs, when he is going to introduce his Hero to the infernal regions, and to diſcloſe the ſecrets of the great deep.

Dii quibus imperium eſt animarum, umbræque ſilentes,
Et Chaos, et Phlegethon, loca nocte ſilentia latè,
Sit mihi fas audita loqui; ſit numine veſtro
Pandere res alta terrâ, et calligine merſas.
Ibant obſcuri, ſola ſub nocte, per umbram,
Perque domos Ditis vacuos, et inania regna;
Quale per incertam lunam, ſub luce maligna
Eſt iter in ſylvis——*.

Theſe

* Ye ſubterranean Gods, whoſe awful ſway
The gliding ghoſts and ſilent ſhades obey;

O Chaos,

Theſe paſſages I quote at preſent, not ſo much as inſtances of Sublime Writing, though in themſelves they are truly ſo, as to ſhew, by the effect of them, that the objects which they preſent to us belong to the claſs of ſublime ones.

OBSCURITY, we are farther to remark, is not unfavourable to the Sublime. Though it render the object indiſtinct, the impreſſion, however, may be great; for, as an ingenious author has well obſerved, it is one thing to make an idea clear, and another to make it affecting to the imagination; and the imagination may be ſtrongly affected, and, in fact, often is ſo, by objects of which we have no clear conception. Thus we ſee, that almoſt all the deſcriptions given us of the appearances of ſupernatural Beings, carry ſome Sublimity, though the conceptions which they afford us be confuſed and indiſtinct. Their Sublimity ariſes from the ideas, which they always convey, of ſuperior power and might, joined with an awful obſcurity. We

O Chaos, hear! and Phlegethon profound!
Whoſe ſolemn empire ſtretches wide around!
Give me, ye great tremendous powers! to tell
Of ſcenes and wonders in the depths of Hell;
Give me your mighty ſecrets to diſplay,
From thoſe black realms of darkneſs to the day.

PITT.

Obſcure they went; through dreary ſhades, that led
Along the waſte dominions of the dead;
As wander travellers in woods by night,
By the moon's doubtful and malignant light.

DRYDEN.

may

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may ſee this fully exemplified in the following noble paſſage of the book of Job: "In thoughts "from the viſions of the night, when deep ſleep "falleth upon men, fear came upon me, and "trembling, which made all my bones to ſhake. "Then a ſpirit paſſed before my face; the hair "of my fleſh ſtood up; it ſtood ſtill; but I could "not diſcern the form thereof; an image was "before mine eyes; there was ſilence; and I "heard a voice—Shall mortal man be more juſt "than God*?" (Job, iv. 15.) No ideas, it is plain, are ſo ſublime as thoſe taken from the Supreme Being; the moſt unknown, but the greateſt of all objects; the infinity of whoſe nature, and the eternity of whoſe duration, joined with the omnipotence of his power, though they ſurpaſs our conceptions, yet exalt them to the higheſt. In general, all objects that are greatly raiſed above us, or far removed from us, either in ſpace or in time, are apt to ſtrike us as great. Our viewing

* The picture which Lucretius has drawn of the dominion of ſuperſtition over mankind, repreſenting it as a portentous ſpectre ſhewing its head from the clouds, and diſmaying the whole human race with its countenance, together with the magnanimity of Epicurus in raiſing himſelf up againſt it, carries all the grandeur of a ſublime, obſcure, and awful image.

Humana ante oculos fœde cum vita jaceret
In terris, oppreſſa gravi ſub religione,
Quæ caput cœli regionibus oſtendebat,
Horribili ſuper aſpectu mortalibus inſtans,
Primum Graius homo mortales tollere contra
Eſt oculos auſus.— LIB. I.

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them as through the miſt of diſtance or antiquity, is favourable to the impreſſions of their Sublimity. LECT. III.

As obſcurity, ſo diſorder too, is very compatible with grandeur; nay frequently heightens it. Few things that are ſtrictly regular, and methodical, appear ſublime. We ſee the limits on every ſide; we feel ourſelves confined; there is no room for the mind's exerting any great effort. Exact proportion of parts, though it enters often into the Beautiful, is much diſregarded in the Sublime. A great maſs of rocks, thrown together by the hand of nature with wildneſs and confuſion, ſtrike the mind with more grandeur than if they had been adjuſted to one another with the moſt accurate ſymmetry.

In the feeble attempts which human art can make towards producing grand objects (feeble, I mean in compariſon with the powers of nature), greatneſs of dimenſions always conſtitutes a principal part. No pile of building can convey any idea of Sublimity, unleſs it be ample and lofty. There is too in architecture what is called Greatneſs of manner; which ſeems chiefly to ariſe from preſenting the object to us in one full point of view; ſo that it ſhall make its impreſſion whole, entire, and undivided, upon the mind. A Gothic cathedral raiſes ideas of grandeur in our minds, by its ſize, its height, its awful obſcurity, its ſtrength, its antiquity, and its durability.

There

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THERE ſtill remains to be mentioned one claſs of Sublime objects, which may be called the moral, or ſentimental Sublime; ariſing from certain exertions of the human mind; from certain affections, and actions, of our fellow-creatures. Theſe will be found to be all, or chiefly, of that claſs, which comes under the name of Magnanimity, or Heroiſm; and they produce an effect extremely ſimilar to what is produced by the view of grand objects in nature; filling the mind with admiration, and elevating it above itſelf. A noted inſtance of this, quoted by all the French Critics, is the celebrated *Qu'il Mourut* of Corneille, in the Tragedy of Horace. In the famous combat betwixt the Horatii and the Curiatii, the old Horatius, being informed that two of his ſons are ſlain, and that the third had betaken himſelf to flight, at firſt will not believe the report; but being thoroughly aſſured of the fact, is fired with all the ſentiments of high honour and indignation at this ſuppoſed unworthy behaviour of his ſurviving ſon. He is reminded, that his ſon ſtood alone againſt three, and aſked what he wiſhed him to have done?—"To have died,"—he anſwers. In the ſame manner Porus, taken priſoner by Alexander, after a gallant defence, and aſked how he wiſhed to be treated? anſwering, "Like a King;" and Cæſar chiding the pilot who was afraid to ſet out with him in a ſtorm. "Quid times? Cæſarem vehis;" are good inſtances of this ſentimental Sublime. Wherever, in ſome critical and high ſituation, we

behold a man uncommonly intrepid, and reſting upon himſelf; ſuperior to paſſion and to fear; animated by ſome great principle to the contempt of popular opinion, of ſelfiſh intereſt, of dangers, or of death; there we are ſtruck with a ſenſe of the Sublime *. SECT. III.

HIGH virtue is the moſt natural and fertile ſource of this moral Sublimity. However, on ſome occaſions, where Virtue either has no place, or is but imperfectly diſplayed, yet if extraordinary vigour and force of mind be diſcovered, we are not inſenſible to a degree of grandeur in the character; and from the ſplendid conqueror, or the daring conſpirator, whom we are far from

* The Sublime, in natural and in moral objects, is brought before us in one view, and compared together, in the following beautiful paſſage of Akenſide's Pleaſures of the Imagination:

Look then abroad through nature; to the range
Of planets, ſuns, and adamantine ſpheres,
Wheeling, unſhaken, through the void immenſe;
And ſpeak, O man! does this capacious ſcene,
With half that kindling majeſty, dilate
Thy ſtrong conception, as when Brutus roſe
Refulgent, from the ſtroke of Cæſar's fate,
Amid the crowd of patriots; and his arm
Aloft extending, like eternal Jove,
When guilt brings down the thunder, call'd aloud
On Tully's name, and ſhook his crimſon ſteel,
And bade the father of his country hail!
For lo! the tyrant proſtrate on the duſt;
And Rome again is free.— BOOK I.

approving,

SECT. III. approving, we cannot with-hold our admiration *.

I HAVE now enumerated a variety of inſtances, both in inanimate objects and in human life, where the Sublime appears. In all theſe inſtances the emotion raiſed in us is of the ſame kind, although the objects that produce the emotion be of widely different kinds. A queſtion next ariſes, whether we are able to diſcover ſome one fundamental quality in which all theſe different objects agree, and which is the cauſe of their producing

* Silius Italicus ſtudied to give an auguſt idea of Hannibal, by repreſenting him as ſurrounded with all his victories, in the place of guards. One who had formed a deſign of aſſaſſinating him in the midſt of a feaſt, is thus addreſſed:

Fallit te, menſas inter quod credis inermem;
Tot bellis quæſita viro, tot cædibus, armat
Majeſtas æterna ducem. Si admoveris ora
Cannas, & Trebiam ante oculos, Traſymenaque buſta
Et Pauli ſtare ingentem miraberis umbram.

A thought ſomewhat of the ſame nature occurs in a French author: "Il ſe cache; mais ſa reputation le decouvre: Il marche "ſans ſuite & ſans equipage; mais chacun, dans ſon eſprit, le "met ſur un char de triomphe. On compte, en le voiant, les "ennemis qu'il a vaincus, non pas les ſerviteurs qui le ſuivent. "Tout ſeul qu'il eſt, on ſe figure, autour de lui, ſes vertus, & ſes "victoires que l'accompagnent. Moins il eſt ſuperbe, plus il "devient venerable" Oraiſon funebre de M. de Turenne, par M. Flechier. — Both theſe paſſages are ſplendid, rather than ſublime. In the firſt there is a want of juſtneſs in the thought; in the ſecond, of ſimplicity in the expreſſion.

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an emotion of the ſame nature in our minds? Various hypotheſes have been formed concerning this; but, as far as appears to me, hitherto unſatisfactory. Some have imagined that amplitude or great extent, joined with ſimplicity, is either immediately, or remotely, the fundamental quality of whatever is ſublime; but we have ſeen that amplitude is confined to one ſpecies of Sublime Objects; and cannot, without violent ſtraining, be applied to them all. The author of "a Phi-"loſophical Enquiry into the Origin of our Ideas "of the Sublime and Beautiful," to whom we are indebted for ſeveral ingenious and original thoughts upon this ſubject, propoſes a formal theory upon this foundation; That terror is the ſource of the Sublime, and that no objects have this character but ſuch as produce impreſſions of pain and danger. It is indeed true, that many terrible objects are highly ſublime; and that grandeur does not refuſe an alliance with the idea of danger. But though this is very properly illuſtrated by the Author (many of whoſe ſentiments on that head I have adopted), yet he ſeems to ſtretch his theory too far, when he repreſents the Sublime as conſiſting wholly in modes of danger, or of pain. For the proper ſenſation of Sublimity appears to be diſtinguiſhable from the ſenſation of either of theſe; and, on ſeveral occaſions, to be entirely ſeparated from them. In many grand objects, there is no coincidence with terror at all; as in the magnificent proſpect of wide extended plains, and of the ſtarry firmament;

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firmament; or in the moral diſpoſitions and ſentiments, which we view with high admiration; and in many painful and terrible objects alſo, it is clear, there is no ſort of grandeur. The amputation of a limb, or the bite of a ſnake, are exceedingly terrible; but are deſtitute of all claim whatever to Sublimity. I am inclined to think, that mighty force or power, whether accompanied with terror or not, whether employed in protecting or in alarming us, has a better title than any thing that has yet been mentioned, to be the fundamental quality of the Sublime; as, after the review which we have taken, there does not occur to me any Sublime Object, into the idea of which, power, ſtrength, and force, either enter, not directly, or are not, at leaſt, intimately aſſociated with the idea, by leading our thoughts to ſome aſtoniſhing power, as concerned in the production of the object. However, I do not inſiſt upon this as ſufficient to found a general theory; it is enough to have given this view of the nature and different kinds of Sublime Objects; by which I hope to have laid a proper foundation for diſcuſſing, with greater accuracy, the Sublime in Writing and Compoſition.

LECTURE IV.

THE SUBLIME IN WRITING.

HAVING treated of Grandeur or Sublimity in external objects, the way ſeems now to be cleared, for treating, with more advantage, of the deſcription of ſuch objects; or, of what is called the Sublime in Writing. Though I may appear to enter early on the conſideration of this ſubject; yet, as the Sublime is a Species of Writing which depends leſs than any other on the artificial embelliſhments of rhetoric, it may be examined with as much propriety here, as in any ſubſequent part of the Lectures. LECT. IV.

MANY critical terms have unfortunately been employed, in a ſenſe too looſe and vague, none more ſo than that of the Sublime. Every one is acquainted with the character of Cæſar's Commentaries, and of the ſtyle in which they are written; a ſtyle remarkably pure, ſimple, and elegant;

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but the moſt remote from the Sublime, of any of the claſſical authors. Yet this author has a German critic, Johannes Gulielmus Bergerus, who wrote no longer ago than the year 1720, pitched upon as the perfect model of the Sublime, and has compoſed a quarto volume, intitled *De naturali Pulchritudine Orationis;* the expreſs intention of which is to ſhew, that Cæſar's Commentaries contain the moſt complete exemplification of all Longinus's rules relating to Sublime Writing. This I mention as a ſtrong proof of the confuſed ideas which have prevailed concerning this ſubject. The true ſenſe of Sublime Writing, undoubtedly, is ſuch a deſcription of objects, or exhibition of ſentiments, which are in themſelves of a Sublime nature, as ſhall give us ſtrong impreſſions of them. But there is another very indefinite, and therefore very improper, ſenſe, which has been too often put upon it; when it is applied to ſignify any remarkable and diſtinguiſhing excellency of compoſition; whether it raiſe in us the ideas of grandeur, or thoſe of gentleneſs, elegance, or any other ſort of beauty. In this ſenſe Cæſar's Commentaries may, indeed, be termed Sublime, and ſo may many Sonnets, Paſtorals, and Love Elegies, as well as Homer's Iliad. But this evidently confounds the uſe of words; and marks no one ſpecies, or character, of compoſition whatever.

I AM ſorry to be obliged to obſerve, that the Sublime is too often uſed in this laſt and improper ſenſe,

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ſenſe, by the celebrated critic Longinus, in his treatiſe on this ſubject. He ſets out, indeed, with deſcribing it in its juſt and proper meaning; as ſomething that elevates the mind above itſelf, and fills it with high conceptions, and a noble pride. But from this view of it he frequently departs; and ſubſtitutes in the place of it, whatever, in any ſtrain of compoſition, pleaſes highly. Thus, many of the paſſages which he produces as inſtances of the Sublime, are merely elegant, without having the moſt diſtant relation to proper Sublimity; witneſs Sappho's famous Ode, on which he deſcants at conſiderable length. He points out five ſources of the Sublime. The firſt is, Boldneſs or Grandeur in the Thoughts; the ſecond is, the Pathetic; the third, the proper application of Figures; the fourth, the uſe of Tropes and beautiful Expreſſions; the fifth, Muſical Structure and Arrangement of Words. This is the plan of one who was writing a treatiſe of rhetoric, or of the beauties of Writing in general; not of the Sublime in particular. For of theſe five heads, only the two firſt have any peculiar relation to the Sublime; Boldneſs and Grandeur in the Thoughts, and, in ſome inſtances, the Pathetic, or ſtrong, exertions of Paſſion: the other three, Tropes, Figures, and Muſical Arrangements, have no more relation to the Sublime, than to other kinds of good Writing; perhaps leſs to the Sublime than to any other ſpecies whatever; becauſe it requires leſs the aſſiſtance of ornament. From this it ap-

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pears, that clear and preciſe ideas on this head are not to be expected from that writer. I would not, however, be underſtood, as if I meant, by this cenſure, to repreſent his treatiſe as of ſmall value. I know no critic, ancient or modern, that diſcovers a more lively reliſh of the beauties of fine writing, than Longinus; and he has alſo the merit of being himſelf an excellent, and, in ſeveral paſſages, a truly Sublime, writer. But, as his work has been generally conſidered as a ſtandard on this ſubject, it was incumbent on me to give my opinion concerning the benefit to be derived from it. It deſerves to be conſulted, not ſo much for diſtinct inſtruction concerning the Sublime, as for excellent general ideas concerning beauty in writing.

I RETURN now to the proper and natural idea of the Sublime in compoſition. The foundation of it muſt always be laid in the nature of the object deſcribed. Unleſs it be ſuch an object as, if preſented to our eyes, if exhibited to us in reality, would raiſe ideas of that elevating, that awful, and magnificent kind, which we call Sublime; the deſcription, however finely drawn, is not entitled to come under this claſs. This excludes all objects that are merely beautiful, gay, or elegant. In the next place, the object muſt not only, in itſelf, be Sublime, but it muſt be ſet before us in ſuch a light as is moſt proper to give us a clear and full impreſſion of it; it muſt be deſcribed with ſtrength, with conciſeneſs, and ſimplicity. This

2 depends,

depends, principally, upon the lively impreſſion which the poet, or orator, has of the object which he exhibits; and upon his being deeply affected, and warmed, by the Sublime idea which he would convey. If his own feeling be languid, he can never inſpire us with any ſtrong emotion. Inſtances, which are extremely neceſſary on this ſubject, will clearly ſhew the importance of all the requiſites which I have juſt now mentioned. LECT. IV.

It is, generally ſpeaking, among the moſt ancient authors, that we are to look for the moſt ſtriking inſtances of the Sublime. I am inclined to think, that the early ages of the world, and the rude unimproved ſtate of ſociety, are peculiarly favourable to the ſtrong emotions of Sublimity. The genius of men is then much turned to admiration and aſtoniſhment. Meeting with many objects, to them new and ſtrange, their imagination is kept glowing, and their paſſions are often raiſed to the utmoſt. They think, and expreſs themſelves boldly, and without reſtraint. In the progreſs of ſociety, the genius and manners of men undergo a change more favourable to accuracy, than to ſtrength or Sublimity.

Of all writings, ancient or modern, the Sacred Scriptures afford us the higheſt inſtances of the Sublime. The deſcriptions of the Deity, in them, are wonderfully noble; but from the grandeur of the object, and the manner of repreſenting it. What an aſſemblage, for inſtance, of awful and

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ſublime ideas is preſented to us, in that paſſage of the XVIIIth Pſalm, where an appearance of the Almighty is deſcribed? "In my diſtreſs I called "upon the Lord; he heard my voice out of his "temple, and my cry came before him. Then "the earth ſhook and trembled; the foundations "alſo of the hills were moved; becauſe he was "wroth. He bowed the heavens and came down, "and darkneſs was under his feet; and he did "ride upon a cherub, and did fly; yea, he did fly "upon the wings of the wind. He made dark-"neſs his ſecret place; his pavillion round about "him were dark waters, and thick clouds of the "ſky." Here, agreeably to the principles eſtabliſhed in the laſt Lecture, we ſee, with what propriety and ſucceſs the circumſtances of darkneſs and terror are applied for heightening the Sublime. So, alſo, the prophet Habakkuk, in a ſimilar paſſage: "He ſtood, and meaſured the earth; he "beheld, and drove aſunder the nations. The "everlaſting mountains were ſcattered; the per-"petual hills did bow; his ways are everlaſting. "The mountains ſaw thee; and they trembled. "The overflowing of the water paſſed by. The "deep uttered his voice and lifted up his hands on "high."

THE noted inſtance, given by Longinus, from Moſes, "God ſaid, let there be light; and there "was light;" is not liable to the cenſure which I paſſed on ſome of his inſtances, of being foreign to the ſubject. It belongs to the true Sublime; and

and the Sublimity of it ariſes from the ſtrong conception it gives, of an exertion of power, producing its effect with the utmoſt ſpeed and facility. A thought of the ſame kind is magnificently amplified in the following paſſage of Iſaiah (chap. xliv. 24. 27, 28.): "Thus ſaith the Lord, thy Redeemer, and he that formed thee from the "womb: I am the Lord that maketh all things, "that ſtretcheth forth the heavens alone, that "ſpreadeth abroad the earth by myſelf—that "ſaith to the deep, Be dry, and I will dry up thy "rivers; that ſaith of Cyrus, He is my ſhepherd, "and ſhall perform all my pleaſure; even ſaying "to Jeruſalem, Thou ſhalt be built; and to the "Temple, Thy foundation ſhall be laid." There is a paſſage in the Pſalms, which deſerves to be mentioned under this head; "God," ſays the Pſalmiſt, "ſtilleth the noiſe of the ſeas, the noiſe "of their waves, and the tumults of the people." The joining together two ſuch grand objects, as the raging of the waters, and the tumults of the people, between which there is ſo much reſemblance as to form a very natural aſſociation in the fancy, and the repreſenting them both as ſubject, at one moment, to the command of God, produces a noble effect. LECT. IV.

Homer is a poet, who, in all ages, and by all critics, has been greatly admired for Sublimity; and he owes much of his grandeur to that native and unaffected ſimplicity which characteriſes his

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manner. His deſcriptions of hoſts engaging; the animation, the fire, and rapidity, which he throws into his battles, preſent to every reader of the Iliad, frequent inſtances of Sublime Writing. His introduction of the gods, tends often to heighten, in a high degree, the majeſty of his warlike ſcenes. Hence Longinus beſtows ſuch high and juſt commendations on that paſſage, in the XVth book of the Iliad, where Neptune, when preparing to iſſue forth into the engagement, is deſcribed as ſhaking the mountains with his ſteps, and driving his chariot along the ocean. Minerva, arming herſelf for fight in the Vth book; and Apollo, in the XVth, leading on the Trojans, and flaſhing terror with his Ægis on the face of the Greeks; are ſimilar inſtances of great Sublimity added to the deſcription of battles, by the appearances of thoſe celeſtial beings. In the XXth book, where all the gods take part in the engagement, according as they ſeverally favour either the Grecians or the Trojans, the poet's genius is ſignally diſplayed, and the deſcription riſes into the moſt awful magnificence. All nature is repreſented as in commotion. Jupiter thunders in the heavens; Neptune ſtrikes the earth with his Trident; the ſhips, the city, and the mountains ſhake; the earth trembles to its centre; Pluto ſtarts from his throne, in dread leſt the ſecrets of the infernal region ſhould be laid open to the views of mortals. The paſſage is worthy of being inſerted.

Αὐτὰρ

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Αὐτὰρ ἐπεὶ μετ' ὄμιλον Ὀλύμπιοι ἤλυθον ἀνδρῶν,
Ὦρτο δ' Ἔρις κρατερὴ, λαοσσόος· αὖε δ' Ἀθήνη,—
Αὖτε δ' Ἄρης ἐτίρωθεν, ἐρεμνῇ λαίλαπι ἶσος,—
Ὣς τὼς αμφωτέρους μάκαρες θεοὶ ὀτρύνοντες,
Σύμβαλον, ἐν δ' αὐτοῖς ἔριδα ξύνηυτο βαρεῖαν·
Δεινὸν δ' ἴβρεντησε πατὴρ ἀνδρῶν τε θεῶν τε
Ὕψόθεν· αὐτὰρ ὑπερθε Ποσειδάων ἐτίναξε
Γαῖαν ἀπειρεσίην, ὀρέων τ' αἰπεινὰ κάρηνα.
Πάντες δ' ἰσσείοντο πόδες πολυπιδάκου Ἴδης,
Καὶ κορυφαὶ, Τρώων τε πόλις, καὶ νῆες Ἀχαιῶν.
Ἔδδεισεν δ' ὑπένερθεν ἄναξ ἐνέρων, Ἀϊδωνεὺς,
Δείσας δ' ἐκ θρόνου ἆλτο, καὶ ἴαχε· μὴ οἱ ὕπερθε
Γαῖαν ἀναρρήξας Ποσειδάων ἐνοσίχθων,
Οἰκία δὲ θνητοῖσι καὶ ἀθανάτοισι φανείη
Σμερδαλέ', ἰυγρύεντα, τά τε στυγέουσι θεοὶ περ
Τόσσος ἄρα κτύπος ὦρτο θεῶν ἐριδι ξυνιόντων *.

Iliad, 20. 47, &c.

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* But when the powers deſcending ſwell'd the fight,
Then tumult roſe, fierce rage, and pale affright;
Now through the trembling ſhores Minerva calls,
And now ſhe thunders from the Grecian walls.
Mars hov'ring o'er his Troy, his terror ſhrouds
In gloomy tempeſts, and a night of clouds;
Now through each Trojan heart he fury pours,
With voice divine, from Ilion's topmoſt towers.—
Above, the Sire of Gods his thunder rolls,
And peals on peals redoubled rend the poles.
Beneath, ſtern Neptune ſhakes the ſolid ground,
The foreſts wave, the mountains nod around;
Through all her ſummits tremble Ida's woods,
And from their ſources boil her hundred floods.
Troy's turrets totter on the rocking plain,
And the toſs'd navies beat the heaving main.

Deep

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THE Works of Oſſian (as I have elſewhere ſhewn) abound with examples of the Sublime. The ſubjects of which that author treats, and the manner in which he writes, are particularly favourable to it. He poſſeſſes all the plain and venerable manner of the ancient times. He deals in no ſuperfluous or gaudy ornaments; but throws forth his images with a rapid conciſeneſs, which enables them to ſtrike the mind with the greateſt force. Among poets of more poliſhed times, we are to look for the graces of correct writing, for juſt proportion of parts, and ſkilfully conducted narration. In the midſt of ſmiling ſcenery and pleaſurable themes, the gay and the beautiful will appear, undoubtedly, to more advantage. But amidſt the rude ſcenes of nature and of ſociety, ſuch as Oſſian deſcribes; amidſt rocks, and torrents, and whirlwinds, and battles, dwells the Sublime; and naturally aſſociates itſelf with that grave and ſolemn ſpirit which diſtinguiſhes the author of Fingal. "As autumn's dark ſtorms pour from two echo-"ing hills, ſo toward each other approached the

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Deep in the diſmal region of the dead,
Th' infernal monarch rear'd his horrid head,
Leapt from his throne, leſt Neptune's arms ſhould lay
His dark dominions open to the day;
And pour in light on Pluto's drear abodes,
Abhorr'd by men and dreadful ev'n to Gods.
Such wars th' immortals wage; ſuch horrors rend
The world's vaſt concave, when the Gods contend.

POPE.

heroes,

" heroes. As two dark ſtreams from high rocks " meet and mix, and roar on the plain: loud, " rough, and dark, in battle, met Lochlin and " Inisfail; chief mixed his ſtrokes with chief, and " man with man. Steel clanging ſounded on " ſteel. Helmets are cleft on high; blood burſts, " and ſmokes around. As the troubled noiſe of " the ocean when roll the waves on high; as the " laſt peal of the thunder of heaven; ſuch is the " noiſe of battle. The groan of the people " ſpread over the hills. It was like the thunder " of night, when the cloud burſts on Cona, and a " thouſand ghoſts ſhriek at once on the hollow " wind." Never were images of more awful Sublimity employed to heighten the terror of battle.

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I HAVE produced theſe inſtances, in order to demonſtrate that conciſeneſs and ſimplicity are eſſential to Sublime Writing. Simplicity, I place in oppoſition to ſtudied and profuſe ornament; and conciſeneſs, to ſuperfluous expreſſion. The reaſon why a defect, either in conciſeneſs or ſimplicity, is hurtful in a peculiar manner to the Sublime, I ſhall endeavour to explain. The emotion occaſioned in the mind by ſome great or noble object, raiſes it conſiderably above its ordinary pitch. A ſort of enthuſiaſm is produced, extremely agreeable while it laſts; but from which the mind is tending every moment to fall down into its ordinary ſituation. Now, when an author has brought us, or is attempting to bring us, into this ſtate, if he multiplies words unneceſſarily, if he decks

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decks the ſublime object which he preſents to us, round and round, with glittering ornaments; nay, if he throws in any one decoration that ſinks in the leaſt below the capital image, that moment he alters the key; he relaxes the tenſion of the mind; the ſtrength of the feeling is emaſculated; the Beautiful may remain, but the Sublime is gone.—When Julius Cæſar ſaid to the Pilot who was afraid to put to ſea with him in a ſtorm, "Quid "times? Cæſarem vehis;" we are ſtruck with the daring magnanimity of one relying with ſuch confidence on his cauſe and his fortune. Theſe few words convey every thing neceſſary to give us the impreſſion full. Lucan reſolved to amplify and adorn the thought. Obſerve how, every time he twiſts it round, it departs farther from the Sublime, till it end at laſt in tumid declamation.

Sperne minas, inquit, pelagi, ventoque furenti
Trade ſinum: Italiam, ſi, cœlo auctore, recuſas,
Me, pete. Sola tibi cauſa hæc eſt juſta timoris
Victorem non nôſſe tuum; quem numina nunquam
Deſtituunt; de quo male tunc Fortuna meretur
Cum poſt vota venit. Medias perrumpe procellas
Tutela ſecure meâ. Cœli iſte fretique
Non puppis noſtræ labor eſt. Hanc Cæſare preſſam
A fluctu defendet onus; nam proderit undis
Iſte ratis:——Quid tanta ſtrage paratur
Ignoras? quærit pelagi cœlique tumultu
Quid præſtet fortuna mihi *.——PHARS. V. 578.

On

* But Cæſar ſtill ſuperior to diſtreſs,
Fearleſs, and confident of ſure ſucceſs,
Thus to the pilot loud:——The ſeas deſpiſe,
And the vain threat'ning of the noiſy ſkies:

Though

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On account of the great importance of ſimplicity and conciſeneſs, I conceive rhyme, in Engliſh verſe, to be, if not inconſiſtent with the Sublime, at leaſt very unfavourable to it. The conſtrained elegance of this kind of verſe, and ſtudied ſmoothneſs of the ſounds, anſwering regularly to each other at the end of the line, though they be quite conſiſtent with gentle emotions, yet weaken the native force of Sublimity; beſides, that the ſuperfluous words which the poet is often obliged to introduce, in order to fill up the rhyme, tend farther to enfeeble it. Homer's deſcription of the nod of Jupiter, as ſhaking the heavens, has been admired in all ages, as highly Sublime. Literally tranſlated, it runs thus: "He ſpoke, and bending

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Though Gods deny thee yon Auſonian ſtrand,
Yet go, I charge you, go, at my command.
Thy ignorance alone can cauſe thy fears,
Thou know'ſt not what a freight thy veſſel bears;
Thou know'ſt not I am he to whom 'tis given,
Never to want the care of watchful heaven.
Obedient fortune waits my humble thrall,
And, always ready, comes before I call.
Let winds, and ſeas, loud wars at freedom wage,
And waſte upon themſelves their empty rage;
A ſtronger, mightier Dæmon is thy friend,
Thou, and thy bark, on Cæſar's fate depend.
Thou ſtand'ſt amaz'd to view this dreadful ſcene,
And wonder'ſt what the Gods and Fortune mean;
But artfully their bounties thus they raiſe,
And from my danger arrogate new praiſe:
Amidſt the fears of death they bid me live,
And ſtill enhance what they are ſure to give. Rowe.

"his

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" his ſable brows, gave the awful nod; while he " ſhook the celeſtial locks of his immortal head, " all Olympus was ſhaken." Mr. Pope tranſlates it thus:

He ſpoke: and awful bends his ſable brows,
Shakes his ambroſial curls, and gives the nod,
The ſtamp of fate, and ſanction of a God.
High heaven with trembling the dread ſignal took,
And all Olympus to its centre ſhook.

THE image is ſpread out, and attempted to be beautified; but it is, in truth, weakened. The third line—" The ſtamp of fate, and ſanction of " a God," is merely expletive; and introduced for no other reaſon but to fill up the rhyme; for it interrupts the deſcription, and clogs the image. For the ſame reaſon, out of mere compliance with the rhyme, Jupiter is repreſented as ſhaking his locks before he gives the nod;—" Shakes his am- " broſial curls, and gives the nod," which is trifling, and without meaning. Whereas, in the original, the hair of his head ſhaken, is the effect of his nod, and makes a happy picturesque circumſtance in the deſcription *.

THE boldneſs, freedom, and variety of our blank verſe, is infinitely more favourable than rhyme, to all kinds of Sublime poetry. The fulleſt proof of this is afforded by Milton; an author whoſe

* See Webb, on the Beauties of Poetry.

genius

genius led him eminently to the Sublime. The whole firſt and ſecond books of Paradiſe loſt, are continued inſtances of it. Take only for an example, the following noted deſcription of Satan, after his fall, appearing at the head of the infernal hoſts: LECT. IV.

——— He, above the reſt,
In ſhape and geſture proudly eminent,
Stood like a tower: his form had not yet loſt
All her original brightneſs, nor appeared
Leſs than archangel ruined; and the exceſs
Of glory obſcured: As when the ſun, new riſen,
Looks through the horizontal miſty air,
Shorn of his beams; or, from behind the moon,
In dim eclipſe, diſaſtrous twilight ſheds
On half the nations, and with fear of change
Perplexes monarchs. Darken'd ſo, yet ſhone
Above them all, th' Archangel.———

Here concur a variety of ſources of the Sublime; the principal object eminently great; a high ſuperior nature, fallen indeed, but erecting itſelf againſt diſtreſs; the grandeur of the principal object heightened, by aſſociating it with ſo noble an idea as that of the ſun ſuffering an eclipſe; this picture ſhaded with all thoſe images of change and trouble, of darkneſs and terror, which coincide ſo finely with the Sublime emotion; and the whole expreſſed in a ſtyle and verſification, eaſy, natural, and ſimple, but magnificent.

I HAVE ſpoken of ſimplicity and conciſeneſs as eſſential to Sublime Writing. In my general de-

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ſcription of it, I mentioned Strength, as another neceſſary requiſite. The Strength of deſcription ariſes, in a great meaſure, from a ſimple conciſeneſs; but, it ſuppoſes alſo ſomething more; namely, a proper choice of circumſtances in the deſcription, ſo as to exhibit the object in its full and moſt ſtriking point of view. For every object has ſeveral faces, ſo to ſpeak, by which it may be preſented to us, according to the circumſtances with which we ſurround it; and it will appear eminently Sublime, or not, in proportion as all theſe circumſtances are happily choſen, and of a Sublime kind. Here lies the great art of the writer; and indeed, the great difficulty of Sublime deſcription. If the deſcription be too general, and diveſted of circumſtances, the object appears in a faint light; it makes a feeble impreſſion, or no impreſſion at all, on the reader. At the ſame time, if any trivial or improper circumſtances are mingled, the whole is degraded.

A STORM or tempeſt, for inſtance, is a Sublime object in nature. But, to render it Sublime in deſcription, it is not enough, either to give us mere general expreſſions concerning the violence of the tempeſt, or to deſcribe its common vulgar effects, in overthrowing trees and houſes. It muſt be painted with ſuch circumſtances as fill the mind with great and awful ideas. This is very happily done by Virgil, in the following paſſage:

Ipſe

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Ipſe Pater, mediâ nimborum in nocte, coruſcâ
Fulmina molitur dextrâ; quo maxima motu
Terra tremit; fugere feræ; et mortalia corda
Per gentes humilis ſtravit pavor: Ille flagranti
Aut Atho, aut Rhodopen, aut alta Ceraunia telo
Dejicit *. GEORG. I.

Every circumſtance in this noble deſcription is the production of an imagination heated and aſtoniſhed with the grandeur of the object. If there be any defect, it is in the words immediately following thoſe I have quoted; "Ingeminant Auſtri, et "denſiſſimus imber;" where the tranſition is made too haſtily, I am afraid, from the preceding ſublime images, to a thick ſhower, and the blowing of the ſouth wind; and ſhews how difficult it frequently is, to deſcend with grace, without ſeeming to fall.

* The Father of the Gods his glory ſhrouds,
Involv'd in tempeſts, and a night of clouds:
And from the middle darkneſs flaſhing out,
By fits he deals his fiery bolts about.
Earth feels the motions of her angry God,
Her entrails tremble, and her mountains nod,
And flying beaſts in foreſts ſeek abode.
Deep horror ſeizes every human breaſt;
Their pride is humbled, and their fears confeſt;
While he, from high, his rolling thunder throws,
And fires the mountains with repeated blows;
The rocks are from their old foundations rent;
The winds redouble, and the rains augment. DRYDEN.

LECT. IV. THE high importance of the rule which I have been now giving concerning the proper choice of circumſtances, when deſcription is meant to be Sublime, ſeems to me not to have been ſufficiently attended to. It has, however, ſuch a foundation in nature, as renders the leaſt deflexion from it fatal. When a writer is aiming at the Beautiful only, his deſcriptions may have improprieties in them, and yet be beautiful ſtill. Some trivial, or misjudged circumſtances can be overlooked by the reader; they make only the difference of more or leſs; the gay, or pleaſing emotion, which he has raiſed, ſubſiſts ſtill. But the caſe is quite different with the ſublime. There, one trifling circumſtance, one mean idea, is ſufficient to deſtroy the whole charm. This is owing to the nature of the emotion aimed at by Sublime deſcription, which admits of no mediocrity, and cannot ſubſiſt in a middle ſtate; but muſt either highly tranſport us, or, if unſucceſsful in the execution, leave us greatly diſguſted, and diſpleaſed. We attempt to riſe along with the writer; the imagination is awakened, and put upon the ſtretch; but it requires to be ſupported; and if, in the midſt of its efforts, you deſert it unexpectedly, down it comes, with a painful ſhock. When Milton, in his battle of the angels, deſcribes them as tearing up the mountains, and throwing them at one another; there are, in his deſcription, as Mr. Addiſon has obſerved, no circumſtances but what are properly Sublime:

From

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From their foundations loos'ning to and fro,
They pluck the ſeated hills, with all their load,
Rocks, waters, woods; and by the ſhaggy tops
Uplifting, bore them in their hands.——

Whereas Claudian, in a fragment upon the wars of the giants, has contrived to render this idea of their throwing the mountains, which is in itſelf ſo grand, burleſque and ridiculous; by this ſingle circumſtance, of one of his giants with the mountain Ida upon his ſhoulders, and a river, which flowed from the mountain running down along the giant's back, as he held it up in that poſture. There is a deſcription too in Virgil, which, I think, is cenſurable, though more ſlightly, in this reſpect. It is that of the burning mountain Ætna; a ſubject certainly very proper to be worked up by a poet into a Sublime deſcription:

——Horrificis juxta tonat Ætna ruinis.
Interdumque atram prorumpit ad æthera nubem;
Turbine fumantem piceo, & candente favillâ;
Attollitque globos flammarum, & ſidera lambit.
Interdum ſcopulos, avulſaque viſcera montis
Erigit eructans, liquefactaque ſaxe ſub auras
Cum gemitu glomerat fundoque exæſtuat imo *.

ÆN. III. 571.

Here,

* The port capacious, and ſecure from wind,
Is to the foot of thundering Ætna join'd;
By turns a pitchy cloud ſhe rolls on high,
By turns hot embers from her entrails fly,
And flakes of mounting flames that lick the ſky.

LECT. IV. Here, after ſeveral magnificent images, the Poet concludes with perſonifying the mountain under this figure, "eructans viſcera, cum gemitu," belching up its bowels with a groan; which, by likening the mountain to a ſick, or drunk perſon, degrades the majeſty of the deſcription. It is to no purpoſe to tell us, that the poet here alludes to the fable of the giant Enceladus lying under Mount Ætna; and that he ſuppoſes his motions and toſſings to have occaſioned the fiery eruptions. He intended the deſcription of a Sublime object; and the natural ideas raiſed by a burning mountain, are infinitely more lofty, than the belchings of any giant, how huge ſoever. The debaſing effect of the idea which is here preſented, will appear in a ſtronger light, by ſeeing what figure it makes in a poem of Sir Richard Blackmore's, who, through a monſtrous perverſity of taſte, had choſen this for the capital circumſtance in his deſcription, and thereby (as Dr. Arbuthnot humorouſly obſerves, in his Treatiſe on the Art of Sinking) had repreſented the mountain as in a fit of the cholic.

Ætna, and all the burning mountains, find
Their kindled ſtores with inbred ſtorms of wind
Blown

Oft from her bowels maſſy rocks are thrown,
And ſhivered by the force, come piece-meal down:
Oft liquid lakes of burning ſulphur flow,
Fed from the fiery ſprings that boil below. DRYDEN.

In this tranſlation of Dryden's, the debaſing circumſtance to which I object in the original, is, with propriety, omitted.

Blown up to rage, and roaring out complain,
As torn with inward gripes and torturing pain;
Labouring, they caſt their dreadful vomit round,
And with their melted bowels ſpread the ground.

Such inſtances ſhew how much the Sublime depends upon a juſt ſelection of circumſtances; and with how great care every circumſtance muſt be avoided, which, by bordering in the leaſt upon the mean, or even upon the gay or the trifling, alters the tone of the emotion.

If it ſhall now be inquired, What are the proper ſources of the Sublime? My anſwer is, That they are to be looked for every where in nature. It is not by hunting after tropes, and figures, and rhetorical aſſiſtances, that we can expect to produce it. No: it ſtands clear, for the moſt part, of theſe laboured refinements of art. It muſt come unſought, if it comes at all; and be the natural offſpring of a ſtrong imagination.

Eſt Deus in nobis; agitante caleſcimus illo.

Wherever a great and awful object is preſented in nature, or a very magnanimous and exalted affection of the human mind is diſplayed; thence, if you can catch the impreſſion ſtrongly, and exhibit it warm and glowing, you may draw the Sublime. Theſe are its only proper ſources. In judging of any ſtriking beauty in compoſition, whether it is, or is not to be referred to this claſs, we muſt

LECT. IV. attend to the nature of the emotion which it raiſes; and only, if it be of that elevating, ſolemn, and awful kind, which diſtinguiſhes this feeling, we can pronounce it ſublime.

FROM the account which I have given of the nature of the Sublime, it clearly follows, that it is an emotion which can never be long protracted. The mind, by no force of genius, can be kept, for any conſiderable time, ſo far raiſed above its common tone; but will, of courſe, relax into its ordinary ſituation. Neither are the abilities of any human writer ſufficient to furniſh a long continuation of uninterrupted Sublime ideas. The utmoſt we can expect is, that this fire of imagination ſhould ſometimes flaſh upon us like lightning from heaven, and then diſappear. In Homer and Milton, this effulgence of genius breaks forth more frequently, and with greater luſtre than in moſt authors. Shakeſpeare alſo riſes often into the true Sublime. But no author whatever is Sublime throughout. Some, indeed, there are, who, by a ſtrength, and dignity in their conceptions, and a current of high ideas that runs through their whole compoſition, preſerve the reader's mind always in a tone nearly allied to the Sublime; for which reaſon they may, in a limited ſenſe, merit the name of continued Sublime writers; and in this claſs, we may juſtly place Demoſthenes and Plato.

As

As for what is called the Sublime ſtyle, it is, for the moſt part, a very bad one; and has no relation whatever to the real Sublime. Perſons are apt to imagine, that magnificent words, accumulated epithets, and a certain ſwelling kind of expreſſion, by riſing above what is uſual or vulgar, contributes to, or even forms, the Sublime. Nothing can be more falſe. In all the inſtances of Sublime Writing, which I have given, nothing of this kind appears. "God ſaid, Let there be light, "and there was light." This is ſtriking and Sublime. But put it into what is commonly called the Sublime ſtyle: "The Sovereign Arbiter of "nature, by the potent energy of a ſingle word, "commanded the light to exiſt;" and, as Boileau has well obſerved, the ſtyle indeed is raiſed, but the thought is fallen. In general, in all good writing, the Sublime lies in the thought, not in the words; and when the thought is truly noble, it will, for the moſt part, clothe itſelf in a native dignity of language. The Sublime, indeed, rejects mean, low, or trivial expreſſions; but it is equally an enemy to ſuch as are turgid. The main ſecret of being Sublime, is to ſay great things in few and plain words. It will be found to hold, without exception, that the moſt Sublime authors are the ſimpleſt in their ſtyle; and wherever you find a writer, who affects a more than ordinary pomp and parade of words, and is always endeavouring to magnify his ſubject by epithets, there you may immediately ſuſpect, that feeble in ſentiment,

LECT. IV.

LECT. IV. timent, he is ſtudying to ſupport himſelf by mere expreſſion.

THE ſame unfavourable judgment we muſt paſs on all that laboured apparatus with which ſome writers introduce a paſſage, or deſcription, which they intend ſhall be Sublime; calling on their readers to attend, invoking their muſe, or breaking forth into general, unmeaning exclamations, concerning the greatneſs, terribleneſs, or majeſty of the object, which they are to deſcribe. Mr. Addiſon, in his Campaign, has fallen into an error of this kind, when about to deſcribe the battle of Bl[illegible]im.

But O! my Muſe! what numbers wilt thou find
To ſing the furious troops in battle joined?
Methinks, I hear the drum's tumultuous ſound,
The victor's ſhouts, and dying groans, confound; &c.

Introductions of this kind, are a forced attempt in a writer to ſpur up himſelf, and his reader, when he finds his imagination begin to flag. It is like taking artificial ſpirits in order to ſupply the want of ſuch as are natural. By this obſervation, however, I do not mean to paſs a general cenſure on Mr. Addiſon's Campaign, which, in ſeveral places, is far from wanting merit; and, in particular, the noted compariſon of his hero to the angel who rides in the whirlwind and directs the ſtorm, is a truly Sublime image.

THE

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THE faults oppoſite to the Sublime are chiefly two; the Frigid, and the Bombaſt. The Frigid conſiſts, in degrading an object, or ſentiment, which is ſublime in itſelf, by our mean conception of it; or by our weak, low, and childiſh deſcription of it. This betrays entire abſence, or at leaſt great poverty of genius. Of this there are abundance of examples, and theſe commented upon with much humour, in the treatiſe on the Art of Sinking in Dean Swift's works; the inſtances taken chiefly from Sir Richard Blackmore. One of theſe, I had occaſion already to give, in relation to Mount Ætna, and it were needleſs to produce any more. The Bombaſt lies, in forcing an ordinary or trivial object out of its rank, and endeavouring to raiſe it into the Sublime; or, in attempting to exalt a Sublime object beyond all natural and reaſonable bounds. Into this error, which is but too common, writers of genius may ſometimes fall, by unluckily loſing ſight of the true point of the Sublime. This is alſo called Fuſtian, or Rant. Shakeſpeare, a great but incorrect genius, is not unexceptionable here. Dryden and Lee, in their tragedies, abound with it.

THUS far of the Sublime; of which I have treated fully, becauſe it is ſo capital an excellency in fine writing, and becauſe clear and preciſe ideas on this head are, as far as I know, not to be met with in critical writers.

BEFORE

LECT. IV.

BEFORE I conclude this Lecture, there is one obſervation which I chuſe to make at this time; I ſhall make it once for all, and hope it will be afterwards remembered. It is with reſpect to the inſtances of faults, or rather blemiſhes and imperfections, which, as I have done in this Lecture, I ſhall hereafter continue to take, when I can, from writers of reputation. I have not the leaſt intention thereby to diſparage their character in the general. I ſhall have other occaſions of doing equal juſtice to their beauties. But it is no reflection on any human performance, that it is not abſolutely perfect. The taſk would be much eaſier for me, to collect inſtances of faults from bad writers. But they would draw no attention, when quoted from books which nobody reads. And I conceive, that the method which I follow, will contribute more to make the beſt authors be read with pleaſure, when one properly diſtinguiſhes their beauties from their faults; and is led to imitate and admire only what is worthy of imitation and admiration.

LECTURE V.

BEAUTY, AND OTHER PLEASURES OF TASTE.

LECT. V.

As Sublimity conſtitutes a particular character of compoſition, and forms one of the higheſt excellencies of eloquence and of poetry, it was proper to treat of it at ſome length. It will not be neceſſary to diſcuſs ſo particularly all the other pleaſures that ariſe from Taſte, as ſome of them have leſs relation to our main ſubject. On Beauty only I ſhall make ſeveral obſervations, both as the ſubject is curious, and as it tends to improve Taſte, and to diſcover the foundation of ſeveral of the graces of deſcription and of poetry *.

Beauty, next to Sublimity, affords, beyond doubt, the higheſt pleaſure to the imagination.

* See Hutchinſon's Inquiry concerning Beauty and Virtue.—Gerard on Taſte, chap. iii.—Inquiry into the Origin of the Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful.—Elements of Criticiſm, chap. iii.—Spectator, vol. vi.—Eſſay on the Pleaſures of Taſte,

LECT. V. The emotion which it raiſes, is very diſtinguiſhable from that of Sublimity. It is of a calmer kind; more gentle and ſoothing; does not elevate the mind ſo much, but produces an agreeable ſerenity. Sublimity raiſes a feeling, too violent, as I ſhewed, to be laſting; the pleaſure ariſing from Beauty admits of longer continuance. It extends alſo to a much greater variety of objects than Sublimity; to a variety indeed ſo great, that the feelings which Beautiful objects produce, differ conſiderably, not in degree only, but alſo in kind, from one another. Hence, no word in the language is uſed in a more vague ſignification than Beauty. It is applied to almoſt every external object that pleaſes the eye, or the ear; to a great number of the graces of writing; to many diſpoſitions of the mind; nay, to ſeveral objects of mere abſtract ſcience. We talk currently of a beautiful tree or flower; a beautiful poem; a beautiful character; and a beautiful theorem in mathematics.

HENCE we may eaſily perceive, that, among ſo great a variety of objects, to find out ſome one quality in which they all agree, and which is the foundation of that agreeable ſenſation they all raiſe, muſt be a very difficult, if not, more probably, a vain attempt. Objects, denominated Beautiful, are ſo different, as to pleaſe, not in virtue of any one quality common to them all, but by means of ſeveral different principles in human nature. The agreeable

agreeable emotion which they all raiſe, is ſomewhat of the ſame nature; and, therefore, has the common name of Beauty given to it; but it is raiſed by different cauſes. SECT. V.

HYPOTHESES, however, have been framed by ingenious men, for aſſigning the fundamental quality of Beauty in all objects. In particular, Uniformity amidſt Variety, has been inſiſted on as this fundamental quality. For the Beauty of many figures, I admit that this accounts in a ſatisfactory manner. But when we endeavour to apply this principle to Beautiful objects of ſome other kind, as to Colour, for inſtance, or Motion, we ſhall ſoon find that it has no place. And even in external figured objects, it does not hold that their Beauty is in proportion to their mixture of Variety with Uniformity; ſeeing many pleaſe us as highly beautiful, which have almoſt no variety at all; and others, which are various to a degree of intricacy. Laying ſyſtems of this kind, therefore, aſide, what I now propoſe is, to give an enumeration of ſeveral of thoſe claſſes of objects in which Beauty moſt remarkably appears; and to point out, as far as I can, the ſeparate principles of Beauty in each of them.

COLOUR affords, perhaps, the ſimpleſt inſtance of Beauty, and therefore the fitteſt to begin with. Here, neither Variety, nor Uniformity, nor any other principle that I know, can be aſſigned, as

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the foundation of Beauty. We can refer it to no other cauſe but the ſtructure of the eye, which determines us to receive certain modifications of the rays of light with more pleaſure than others. And we ſee accordingly, that, as the organ of ſenſation varies in different perſons, they have their different favourite colours. It is probable, that aſſociation of ideas has influence, in ſome caſes, on the pleaſure which we receive from colours. Green, for inſtance, may appear more beautiful, by being connected in our ideas with rural proſpects and ſcenes; white, with innocence; blue, with the ſerenity of the ſky. Independent of aſſociations of this kind, all that we can farther obſerve concerning colours is, that thoſe choſen for Beauty are, generally, delicate, rather than glaring. Such are thoſe paintings with which Nature hath ornamented ſome of her works, and which art ſtrives in vain to imitate; as the feathers of ſeveral kinds of birds, the leaves of flowers, and the fine variation of colours exhibited by the ſky at the riſing and ſetting of the ſun. Theſe preſent to us the higheſt inſtances of the Beauty of colouring; and have accordingly been the favourite ſubjects of poetical deſcription in all countries.

FROM Colour we proceed to Figure, which opens to us forms of Beauty more complex and diverſified. Regularity firſt occurs to be noticed as a ſource of Beauty. By a regular figure, is meant, one which we perceive to be formed according

cording to ſome certain rule, and not left arbitrary, or looſe, in the conſtruction of its parts. Thus, a circle, a ſquare, a triangle, or a hexagon, pleaſe the eye, by their regularity, as beautiful figures. We muſt not, however, conclude, that all figures pleaſe in proportion to their regularity; or that regularity is the ſole, or the chief foundation of Beauty in figure. On the contrary, a certain graceful variety is found to be a much more powerful principle of Beauty; and is therefore ſtudied a great deal more than regularity, in all works that are deſigned merely to pleaſe the eye. I am, indeed, inclined to think, that regularity appears beautiful to us, chiefly, if not only, on account of its ſuggeſting the ideas of fitneſs, propriety, and uſe, which have always a greater connection with orderly and proportioned forms, than with thoſe which appear not conſtructed according to any certain rule. It is clear that Nature, who is undoubtedly the moſt graceful artiſt, hath, in all her ornamental works, purſued variety, with an apparent neglect of regularity. Cabinets, doors, and windows, are made after a regular form, in cubes and parallelograms, with exact proportion of parts; and by being ſo formed they pleaſe the eye: for this good reaſon, that, being works of uſe, they are, by ſuch figures, the better ſuited to the ends for which they were deſigned. But plants, flowers and leaves are full of variety and diverſity. A ſtraight canal is an inſipid figure, in compariſon of the meanders of rivers. Cones, and pyramids

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SECT. V. pyramids are beautiful; but trees growing in their natural wildneſs, are infinitely more beautiful than when trimmed into pyramids and cones. The apartments of a houſe muſt be regular in their diſpoſition, for the conveniency of its inhabitants; but a garden, which is deſigned merely for beauty, would be exceedingly diſguſting, if it had as much uniformity and order in its parts as a dwelling-houſe.

Mr. Hogarth, in his Analyſis of Beauty, has obſerved, that figures bounded by curve lines are, in general, more beautiful than thoſe bounded by ſtraight lines and angles. He pitches upon two lines, on which, according to him, the Beauty of figure principally depends; and he has illuſtrated and ſupported his doctrine, by a ſurpriſing number of inſtances. The one is the Waving Line, or a curve bending backwards and forwards, ſomewhat in the form of the letter S. This he calls the Line of Beauty; and ſhows how often it is found in ſhells, flowers, and ſuch other ornamental works of nature; as is common alſo in the figures deſigned by painters and ſculptors, for the purpoſe of decoration. The other line, which he calls the Line of Grace, is the former waving curve, twiſted round ſome ſolid body. The curling worm of a common jack is one of the inſtances he gives of it. Twiſted pillars, and twiſted horns, alſo exhibit it. In all the inſtances which he mentions, Variety plainly appears to be ſo material a principle

ciple of Beauty that he ſeems not to err much when he defines the art of drawing pleaſing forms, to be the art of varying well. For the curve line, ſo much the favourite of painters, derives, according to him its chief advantage, from its perpetual bending and variation from the ſtiff regularity of the ſtraight line. LECT. V.

MOTION furniſhes another ſource of Beauty, diſtinct from figure. Motion of itſelf is pleaſing; and bodies in motion are, "cæteris paribus," preferred to thoſe in reſt. It is, however, only gentle motion that belongs to the Beautiful; for, when it is very ſwift or very forcible, ſuch as that of a torrent, it partakes of the Sublime. The motion of a bird gliding through the air is extremely beautiful; the ſwiftneſs with which lightning darts through the heavens is magnificent and aſtoniſhing. And here it is proper to obſerve, that the ſenſations of Sublime and Beautiful are not always diſtinguiſhed by very diſtant boundaries; but are capable in ſeveral inſtances, of approaching towards each other. Thus, a ſmooth running ſtream is one of the moſt beautiful objects in nature: as it ſwells gradually into a great river, the Beautiful, by degrees, is loſt in the Sublime. A young tree is a beautiful object; a ſpreading ancient oak, is a venerable and a grand one. The calmneſs of a fine morning is beautiful; the univerſal ſtillneſs of the evening is highly ſublime. But to return to the Beauty of motion, it will be found, I think,

LECT. V. I think, to hold very generally, that motion in a ſtraight line is not ſo beautiful as in an undulating waving direction; and motion upwards is, commonly too, more agreeable than motion downwards. The eaſy curling motion of flame and ſmoke may be inſtanced, as an object ſingularly agreeable; and here Mr. Hogarth's waving line recurs upon us as a principle of Beauty. That artiſt obſerves, very ingeniouſly, that all the common and neceſſary motions for the buſineſs of life are performed by men in ſtraight or plain lines; but that all the graceful and ornamental movements are made in waving lines; an obſervation not unworthy of being attended to, by all who ſtudy the grace of geſture and action.

THOUGH Colour, Figure, and Motion, be ſeparate principles of Beauty; yet in many beautiful objects they all meet, and thereby render the Beauty both greater and more complex. Thus, in flowers, trees, animals, we are entertained at once with the delicacy of the colour, with the gracefulneſs of the figure, and ſometimes alſo with the motion of the object. Although each of theſe produce a ſeparate agreeable ſenſation, yet they are of ſuch a ſimilar nature, as readily to mix and blend in one general perception of Beauty, which we aſcribe to the whole object as its cauſe: for Beauty is always conceived by us as ſomething reſiding in the object which raiſes the pleaſant ſenſation; a ſort of glory which dwells upon, and inveſts it.

Perhaps

Perhaps the moſt complete aſſemblage of beautiful objects that can any where be found, is preſented by a rich natural landſcape, where there is a ſufficient variety of objects: fields in verdure, ſcattered trees and flowers, running water, and animals grazing. If to theſe be joined ſome of the productions of art which ſuit ſuch a ſcene, as a bridge with arches over a river, ſmoke riſing from cottages in the midſt of trees, and the diſtant view of a fine building ſeen by the riſing ſun; we then enjoy, in the higheſt perfection, that gay, cheerful, and placid ſenſation which characteriſes Beauty. To have an eye and a taſte formed for catching the peculiar beauties of ſuch ſcenes as theſe, is a neceſſary requiſite for all who attempt poetical deſcription. LECT. V.

THE Beauty of the human countenance is more complex than any that we have yet conſidered. It includes the Beauty of colour, ariſing from the delicate ſhades of the complexion; and the Beauty of figure, ariſing from the lines which form the different features of the face. But the chief Beauty of the countenance depends upon a myſterious expreſſion, which it conveys of the qualities of the mind; of good ſenſe, or good humour; of ſprightlineſs, candour, benevolence, ſenſibility, or other amiable diſpoſitions. How it comes to paſs, that a certain conformation of features is connected in our idea with certain moral qualities; whether we are taught by inſtinct, or by experience, to form

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this connection, and to read the mind in the countenance; belongs not to us now to inquire, nor is indeed eaſy to reſolve. The fact is certain, and acknowledged, that what gives the human countenance its moſt diſtinguiſhing Beauty, is what is called its expreſſion; or an image, which it is conceived to ſhew of internal moral diſpoſitions.

THIS leads us to obſerve, that there are certain qualities of the mind, which, whether expreſſed in the countenance, or by words, or by actions, always raiſe in us a feeling ſimilar to that of Beauty. There are two great claſſes of moral qualities; one is of the high and the great virtues, which require extraordinary efforts, and turn upon dangers and ſufferings; as heroiſm, magnanimity, contempt of pleaſures, and contempt of death. Theſe, as I have obſerved in a former Lecture, excite in the ſpectator an emotion of Sublimity and Grandeur. The other claſs is generally of the ſocial virtues, and ſuch as are of a ſofter and gentler kind; as compaſſion, mildneſs, friendſhip, and generoſity. Theſe raiſe in the beholder a ſenſation of pleaſure, ſo much akin to that produced by beautiful external objects, that, though of a more dignified nature, it may, without impropriety, be claſſed under the ſame head.

A SPECIES of Beauty, diſtinct from any I have yet mentioned, ariſes from deſign or art; or, in other words, from the perception of means being adapted

adapted to an end; or the parts of any thing being well fitted to anſwer the deſign of the whole. When in conſidering the ſtructure of a tree, or a plant, we obſerve how all the parts, the roots, the ſtem, the bark, and the leaves, are ſuited to the growth and nutriment of the whole; much more when we ſurvey all the parts and members of a living animal; or when we examine any of the curious works of art; ſuch as a clock, a ſhip, or any nice machine; the pleaſure which we have in the ſurvey, is wholly founded on this ſenſe of Beauty. It is altogether different from the perception of Beauty produced by colour, figure, variety, or any of the cauſes formerly mentioned. When I look at a watch, for inſtance, the caſe of it, if finely engraved, and of curious workmanſhip, ſtrikes me as Beautiful in the former ſenſe; bright colour, exquiſite poliſh, figures finely raiſed and turned. But when I examine the ſpring and the wheels, and praiſe the beauty of the internal machinery; my pleaſure then ariſes wholly from the view of that admirable art with which ſo many various and complicated parts are made to unite for one purpoſe. SECT. V.

THIS ſenſe of Beauty, in fitneſs and deſign, has an extenſive influence over many of our ideas. It is the foundation of the Beauty which we diſcover in the proportion of doors, windows, arches, pillars, and all the orders of architecture. Let the ornaments of a building be ever ſo fine and elegant

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in themſelves, yet if they interfere with this ſenſe of fitneſs and deſign, they loſe their Beauty, and hurt the eye like diſagreeable objects. Twiſted columns, for inſtance, are undoubtedly ornamental; but as they have an appearance of weakneſs, they always diſpleaſe when they are made uſe of to ſupport any part of a building that is maſſy, and that ſeems to require a more ſubſtantial prop. We cannot look upon any work whatever, without being led, by a natural aſſociation of ideas, to think of its end and deſign, and of courſe to examine the propriety of its parts, in relation to this deſign and end. When their propriety is clearly diſcerned, the works ſeems always to have ſome Beauty; but when there is a total want of propriety, it never fails of appearing deformed. Our ſenſe of fitneſs and deſign, therefore, is ſo powerful, and holds ſo high a rank among our preceptions, as to regulate, in a great meaſure, our other ideas of Beauty: an obſervation which I the rather make, as it is of the utmoſt importance, that all who ſtudy compoſition ſhould carefully attend to it. For in an epic poem, a hiſtory, an oration, or any work of genius, we always require, as we do in other works, a fitneſs, or adjuſtment of means, to the end which the author is ſuppoſed to have in view. Let his deſcriptions be ever ſo rich, or his figures ever ſo elegant, yet, if they are out of place, if they are not proper parts of that whole, if they ſuit not the main deſign, they loſe all their Beauty; nay, from Beauties they are converted into Deformities.

Such

Such power has our ſenſe of fitneſs and congruity, to produce a total transformation of an object whoſe appearance otherwiſe would have been Beautiful. LECT. V.

AFTER having mentioned ſo many various ſpecies of Beauty, it now only remains to take notice of Beauty as it is applied to writing or diſcourſe; a term commonly uſed in a ſenſe altogether looſe and undetermined. For it is applied to all that pleaſes, either in ſtyle or in ſentiment, from whatever principle that pleaſure flows; and a Beautiful poem or oration means, in common language, no other than a good one, or one well compoſed. In this ſenſe, it is plain, the word is altogether indefinite, and points at no particular ſpecies or kind of Beauty. There is, however, another ſenſe, ſomewhat more definite, in which Beauty of writing characteriſes a particular manner; when it is uſed to ſignify a certain grace and amænity, in the turn either of ſtyle or ſentiment, for which ſome authors have been peculiarly diſtinguiſhed. In this ſenſe, it denotes a manner neither remarkably ſublime, nor vehemently paſſionate, nor uncommonly ſparkling; but ſuch as raiſes in the reader an emotion of the gentle placid kind, ſimilar to what is raiſed by the contemplation of beautiful objects in nature; which neither lifts the mind very high, nor agitates it very much but diffuſes over the imagination an agreeable and pleaſing ſerenity. Mr. Addiſon is a writer altogether

LECT. V. of this character; and is one of the moſt proper and preciſe examples that can be given of it. Fenelon, the author of the Adventures of Telemachus, may be given as another example. Virgil too, though very capable of riſing on occaſions into the Sublime, yet, in his general manner, is diſtinguiſhed by the character of Beauty and Grace, rather than of Sublimity. Among orators, Cicero has more of the Beautiful than Demoſthenes, whoſe genius led him wholly towards vehemence and ſtrength.

THIS much it is ſufficient to have ſaid upon the ſubject of Beauty. We have traced it through a variety of forms; as next to Sublimity, it is the moſt copious ſource of the pleaſures of Taſte; and as the conſideration of the different appearances and principles of Beauty, tends to the improvement of Taſte in many ſubjects.

BUT it is not only by appearing under the forms of Sublime or Beautiful, that objects delight the imagination. From ſeveral other principles, alſo, they derive their power of giving it pleaſure.

NOVELTY, for inſtance, has been mentioned by Mr. Addiſon, and by every writer on this ſubject. An object which has no merit to recommend it, except its being uncommon or new, by means of this quality alone, produces in the mind a vivid and

and an agreeable emotion. Hence that paſſion of curioſity, which prevails ſo generally among mankind. Objects and ideas which have been long familiar, make too faint an impreſſion to give an agreeable exerciſe to ou faculties. New and ſtrange objects rouſe the nd from its dormant ſtate, by giving it a quic and pleaſing impulſe. Hence in a great meaſure, the entertainment afforded us by fiction and romance. The emotion raiſed by Novelty is of a more lively and pungent nature than that produced by Beauty; but much ſhorter in its continuance. For if the object have in itſelf no charms to hold our attention, the ſhining gloſs thrown upon it by Novelty ſoon wears off. LECT. V.

Besides Novelty, Imitation is another ſource of Pleaſure to Taſte. This gives riſe to what Mr. Addiſon terms, the Secondary Pleaſures of Imagination; which form, doubtleſs, a very extenſive claſs. For all Imitation affords ſome pleaſure; not only the Imitation of beautiful or great objects, by recalling the original ideas of Beauty or Grandeur which ſuch objects themſelves exhibited; but even objects which have neither Beauty nor Grandeur, nay, ſome which are terrible or deformed, pleaſe us in a ſecondary or repreſented view.

The Pleaſures of Melody and Harmony belong alſo to Taſte. There is no agreeable ſenſation we receive either from Beauty or Sublimity, but what is capable of being heightened by the power

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of muſical ſound. Hence the delight of poetical numbers; and even of the more concealed and looſer meaſures of proſe. Wit, Humour, and Ridicule likewiſe open a variety of Pleaſures to Taſte, quite diſtinct from any that we have yet conſidered.

AT preſent it is not neceſſary to purſue any further the ſubject of the Pleaſures of Taſte. I have opened ſome of the general principles; it is time now to make the application to our chief ſubject. If the queſtion be put, To what claſs of thoſe Pleaſures of Taſte which I have enumerated, that Pleaſure is to be referred, which we receive from poetry, eloquence, or fine writing? My anſwer is, Not to any one, but to them all. This ſingular advantage writing and diſcourſe poſſeſs, that they encompaſs ſo large and rich a field on all ſides, and have power to exhibit, in great perfection, not a ſingle ſet of objects only, but almoſt the whole of thoſe which give Pleaſure to Taſte and Imagination: whether that Pleaſure ariſe from Sublimity, from Beauty in its different forms, from Deſign and Art, from Moral Sentiment, from Novelty, from Harmony, from Wit, Humour, and Ridicule. To whichſoever of theſe the peculiar bent of a perſon's Taſte lies, from ſome writer or other he has it always in his power to receive the gratification of it.

Now this high power which eloquence and poetry poſſeſs, of ſupplying Taſte and Imagination with ſuch

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such a wide circle of pleasures, they derive altogether from their having a greater capacity of Imitation and Description than is possessed by any other art. Of all the means which human ingenuity has contrived for recalling the images of real objects, and awakening, by representation, similar emotions to those which are raised by the original, none is so full and extensive as that which is executed by words and writing. Through the assistance of this happy invention, there is nothing, either in the natural or moral world but what can be represented and set before the mind, in colours very strong and lively. Hence it is usual among critical writers to speak of Discourse as the chief of all the imitative or mimetic arts; they compare it with painting and with sculpture, and in many respects prefer it justly before them.

This style was first introduced by Aristotle in his Poetics; and, since his time, has acquired a general currency among modern authors. But, as it is of consequence to introduce as much precision as possible into critical language, I must observe, that this manner of speaking is not accurate. Neither discourse in general, nor poetry in particular, can be called altogether imitative arts. We must distinguish betwixt Imitation and Description, which are ideas that should not be confounded. Imitation is performed by means of somewhat that has a natural likeness and resemblance to the thing imitated; and of consequence is understood by all;

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ſuch are ſtatues and pictures. Deſcription, again, is the raiſing in the mind the conception of an object by means of ſome arbitrary or inſtituted ſymbols, underſtood only by thoſe who agree in the inſtitution of them; ſuch are words and writing. Words have no natural reſemblance to the ideas or objects which they are employed to ſignify; but a ſtatue or picture has a natural likeneſs to the original. And therefore Imitation and Deſcription differ conſiderably in their nature from each other.

As far, indeed, as the poet introduces into his work perſons actually ſpeaking; and, by the words which he puts into their mouths, repreſents the diſcourſe which they might be ſuppoſed to hold; ſo far his art may more accurately be called Imitative: and this is the caſe in all dramatic compoſition. But, in Narrative or Deſcriptive works, it can with no propriety be called ſo. Who, for inſtance, would call Virgil's Deſcription of a tempeſt, in the firſt Æneid, an Imitation of a ſtorm? If we heard of the Imitation of a battle we might naturally think of ſome mock fight, or repreſentation of a battle on the ſtage, but would never apprehend that it meant one of Homer's Deſcriptions in the Iliad. I admit at the ſame time, that Imitation and Deſcription agree in their principal effect, of recalling, by external ſigns, the ideas of things which they do not ſee. But though in this they coincide, yet it ſhould not be forgotten, that the terms themſelves are not ſynonymous; that they import

import different means of effecting the ſame end; and of courſe make different impreſſions on the mind *. LECT. V.

* Though in the execution of particular parts Poetry is certainly Deſcriptive rather than Imitative, yet there is a qualified ſenſe, in which Poetry, in the general, may be termed an Imitative art. The ſubject of the poet (as Dr. Gerard has ſhown in the Appendix to his Eſſay on Taſte) is intended to be an Imitation, not of things really exiſting, but of the courſe of nature; that is, a feigned repreſentation of ſuch events, or ſuch ſcenes, as, though they never had a being, yet might have exiſted; and which, therefore, by their probability, bear a reſemblance to nature. It was probably in this ſenſe that Ariſtotle termed Poetry a mimetic art. How far either the Imitation or the Deſcription which Poetry employs, is ſuperior to the imitative Powers of Painting and Muſic, is well ſhewn by Mr. Harris, in his Treatiſe on Muſic, Painting, and Poetry. The chief advantage which Poetry or Diſcourſe in general, enjoys, is that whereas, by the nature of his art, the Painter is confined to the repreſentation of a ſingle moment, Writing and Diſcourſe can trace a tranſaction through its whole progreſs. That moment indeed which the Painter pitches upon for the ſubject of his picture, he may be ſaid to exhibit with more advantage than the Poet or Orator; inaſmuch as he ſets before us, in one view, all the minute concurrent circumſtances of the event which happens in one individual point of time, as they appear in nature; while Diſcourſe is obliged to exhibit them in ſucceſſion, and by means of a detail, which is in danger of becoming tedious, in order to be clear; or, if not tedious, is in danger of being obſcure. But to that point of time which he has choſen, the Painter being entirely confined, he cannot exhibit various ſtages of the ſame action or event; and he is ſubject to this farther defect, that he can only exhibit objects as they appear to the eye, and can very imperfectly delineate characters and ſentiments, which are the nobleſt ſubjects of Imitation or Deſcription. The power of repreſenting theſe with full advantage gives a high ſuperiority to Diſcourſe and Writing above all other imitative arts.

WHETHER

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WHETHER we conſider Poetry in particular, and Diſcourſe in general, as Imitative or Deſcriptive; it is evident, that their whole power in recalling the impreſſions of real objects, is derived from the ſignificancy of words. As their excellency flows altogether from this ſource, we muſt, in order to make way for further inquiries, begin at this fountain-head. I ſhall, therefore, in the next Lecture, enter upon the conſideration of Language: of the origin, the progreſs, and conſtruction of which, I purpoſe to treat at ſome length.

LECTURE VI.

RISE AND PROGRESS OF LANGUAGE.

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HAVING finiſhed my obſervations on the Pleaſures of Taſte, which we meant to be introductory to the principal ſubject of theſe Lectures, I now begin to treat of Language; which is the foundation of the whole power of eloquence. This will lead to a conſiderable diſcuſſion; and there are few ſubjects belonging to polite literature which more merit ſuch a diſcuſſion. I ſhall firſt give a Hiſtory of the Riſe and Progreſs of Language in ſeveral particulars, from its early to its more advanced periods; which ſhall be followed by a ſimilar Hiſtory of the Riſe and Progreſs of Writing. I ſhall next give ſome account of the Conſtruction of Language; or the Principles of Univerſal Grammar; and ſhall, laſtly, apply theſe obſervations more particularly to the Engliſh Tongue *.

LANGUAGE

* See Dr. Adam Smith's Diſſertation on the Formation of Languages.—Treatiſe of the Origin and Progreſs of Language, in 3 vols.—Harris's Hermes, or a Philoſophical Inquiry concerning Language and Univerſal Grammar.—Eſſai ſur l'Origine des

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LANGUAGE, in general, ſignifies the expreſſion of our ideas by certain articulate ſounds, which are uſed at the ſigns of thoſe ideas. By articulate ſounds are meant thoſe modulations of ſimple voice, or of ſound emitted from the thorax, which are formed by means of the mouth and its ſeveral organs, the teeth, the tongue, the lips, and the palate. How far there is any natural connexion between the ideas of the mind and the ſounds emitted, will appear from what I have afterwards to offer. But as the natural connexion can, upon any ſyſtem, affect only a ſmall part of the fabric of Language; the connexion between words and ideas may, in general, be conſidered as arbitrary and conventional, owing to the agreement of men among themſelves; the clear proof of which is, that different nations have different Languages, or a different ſet of articulate ſounds, which they have choſen for communicating their ideas.

THIS artificial method of communicating thought we now behold carried to the higheſt perfection. Language is become a vehicle by

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des Connoiſſances Humaines, par l'Abbé Condillac.—Principes de Grammaire, par Marſais.—Grammaire Generale et Raiſonée.—Traité de la Formation Mechanique des Langues, par le Preſideur de Broſſes.—Diſcours ſur l'Inegalité parmi les Hommes, par Rouſſeau.—Grammaire Generale, par Beauzee.—Principes de la Traduction, par Batteux.—Warburton's Divine Legation of Moſes, vol. iii.—Sanctii Minerva, cum notis Perizonii. Les Vrais Principes de la Langue Françoiſe, par l'Abbé Girard.

which

which the moſt delicate and refined emotions of one mind can be tranſmitted, or, if we may ſo ſpeak, transfuſed into another. Not only are names given to all objects around us, by which means an eaſy and ſpeedy intercourſe is carried on for providing the neceſſaries of life, but all the relations and differences among theſe objects are minutely marked, the inviſible ſentiments of the mind are deſcribed, the moſt abſtract notions and conceptions are rendered intelligible; and all the ideas which ſcience can diſcover, or imagination create, are known by their proper names. Nay, Language has been carried ſo far, as to be made an inſtrument of the moſt refined luxury. Not reſting in mere perſpicuity, we require ornament alſo; not ſatisfied with having the conceptions of others made known to us, we make a farther demand, to have them ſo decked and adorned as to entertain our fancy; and this demand, it is found very poſſible to gratify. In this ſtate we now find Language. In this ſtate it has been found among many nations for ſome thouſand years. The object is become familiar; and, like the expanſe of the firmament, and other great objects, which we are accuſtomed to behold, we behold it without wonder.

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But carry your thoughts back to the firſt dawn of Language among men. Reflect upon the feeble beginnings from which it muſt have ariſen, and upon the many and great obſtacles which it muſt have encountered in its progreſs; and you will

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will find reaſon for the higheſt aſtoniſhment on viewing the height which it has now attained. We admire ſeveral of the inventions of art; we plume ourſelves on ſome diſcoveries which have been made in latter ages, ſerving to advance knowledge, and to render life comfortable: we ſpeak of them as the boaſt of human reaſon. But certainly no invention is entitled to any ſuch degree of admiration as that of Language; which, too, muſt have been the product of the firſt and rudeſt ages, if indeed it can be conſidered as a human invention at all.

THINK of the circumſtances of mankind when Language began to be formed. They were a wandering ſcattered race; no ſociety among them except families; and the family ſociety too very imperfect, as their method of living by hunting or paſturage muſt have ſeparated them frequently from one another. In this ſituation, when ſo much divided, and their intercourſe ſo rare, how could any one ſet of ſounds, or words, be generally agreed on as the ſigns of their ideas: Suppoſing that a few, whom chance or neceſſity threw together, agreed by ſome means upon certain ſigns, yet by what authority could theſe be propagated among other tribes or families, ſo as to ſpread and grow up into a Language? One would think, that, in order to any Language fixing and extending itſelf, men muſt have been previouſly gathered together in conſiderable numbers; Society muſt have

have been already far advanced; and yet, on the other hand, there ſeems to have been an abſolute neceſſity for Speech, previous to the formation of Society. For, by what bond could any multitude of men be kept together, or be made to join in the proſecution of any common intereſt, until once, by the intervention of Speech, they could communicate their wants and intentions to one another? So that, either how Society could form itſelf previouſly to Language, or how words could riſe into a Language previouſly to Society formed, ſeem to be points attended with equal difficulty. And when we conſider farther, that curious analogy which prevails in the conſtruction of almoſt all Languages, and that deep and ſubtile logic on which they are founded, difficulties increaſe ſo much upon us, on all hands, that there ſeems to be no ſmall reaſon for referring the firſt origin of all Language to Divine teaching or inſpiration. SECT. VI.

But ſuppoſing Language to have a Divine original, we cannot, however, ſuppoſe, that a perfect ſyſtem of it was all at once given to man. It is much more natural to think, that God taught our firſt parents only ſuch Language as ſuited their preſent occaſions; leaving them, as he did in other things, to enlarge and improve it as their future neceſſities ſhould require. Conſequently, thoſe firſt rudiments of Speech muſt have been poor and narrow; and we are at full liberty to inquire in what manner, and by what ſteps, Lan-

LECT. VI. guage advanced to the ſtate in which we now find it. The hiſtory which I am to give of this progreſs, will ſuggeſt ſeveral things, both curious in themſelves, and uſeful in our future diſquiſitions.

If we ſhould ſuppoſe a period before any words were invented or known, it is clear, that men could have no other method of communicating to others what they felt, than by the cries of paſſion, accompanied with ſuch motions and geſtures as were farther expreſſive of paſſion. For theſe are the only ſigns which nature teaches all men, and which are underſtood by all. One who ſaw another going into ſome place where he himſelf had been frightened or expoſed to danger, and who ſought to warn his neighbour of the danger, could contrive no other way of doing ſo, than by uttering thoſe cries, and making thoſe geſtures, which are the ſigns of fear; juſt as two men, at this day, would endeavour to make themſelves be underſtood by each other, who ſhould be thrown together on a deſolate iſland, ignorant of each other's Language. Thoſe exclamations, therefore, which by Grammarians are called interjections, uttered in a ſtrong and paſſionate manner, were, beyond doubt, the firſt elements or beginnings of Speech.

When more enlarged communications became neceſſary, and names began to be aſſigned to objects, in what manner can we ſuppoſe men to have proceeded in this aſſignation of names, or invention

invention of words? Undoubtedly, by imitating, as much as they could, the nature of the object which they named, by the ſound of the name which they gave to it. As a Painter, who would repreſent graſs, muſt employ a green colour; ſo, in the beginnings of Language, one giving a name to any thing harſh or boiſterous, would of courſe employ a harſh or boiſterous ſound. He could not do otherwiſe, if he meant to excite in the hearer the idea of that thing which he ſought to name. To ſuppoſe words invented, or names given to things, in a manner purely arbitrary, without any ground or reaſon, is to ſuppoſe an effect without a cauſe. There muſt have always been ſome motive which led to the aſſignation of one name rather than another; and we can conceive no motive which would more generally operate upon men in their firſt efforts towards Language, than a deſire to paint, by Speech, the objects which they named, in a manner more or leſs complete, according as the vocal organs had it in their power to effect this imitation. SECT. VI.

WHEREVER objects were to be named, in which ſound, noiſe, or motion were concerned, the imitation by words was abundantly obvious. Nothing was more natural, than to imitate, by the ſound of the voice, the quality of the ſound or noiſe which any external object made; and to form its name accordingly. Thus, in all Languages, we find a multitude of words that are evidently conſtructed

SECT. VI. upon this principle. A certain bird is termed the Cuckoo, from the ſound which it emits. When one ſort of wind is ſaid to *whiſtle*, and another to *roar*; when a ſerpent is ſaid to *hiſs*; a fly to *buz*, and falling timber to *craſh*; when a ſtream is ſaid to *flow*, and hail to *rattle*; the analogy between the word and the thing ſignified is plainly diſcernible.

In the names of objects which addreſs the ſight only, where neither noiſe nor motion are concerned, and ſtill more in the terms appropriated to moral ideas, this analogy appears to fail. Many learned men, however, have been of opinion, that though, in ſuch caſes, it becomes more obſcure, yet it is not altogether loſt; but that throughout the radical words of all Languages, there may be traced ſome degree of correſpondence with the object ſignified. With regard to moral and intellectual ideas, they remark, that, in every Language, the terms ſignificant of them, are derived from the names of ſenſible objects to which they are conceived to be analogous; and with regard to ſenſible objects pertaining merely to ſight, they remark, that their moſt diſtinguiſhing qualities have certain radical ſounds appropriated to the expreſſions of them, in a great variety of Languages. Stability, for inſtance, fluidity, hollowneſs, ſmoothneſs, gentleneſs, violence, &c. they imagine to be painted by the ſound of certain letters or ſyllables, which have ſome relation to thoſe different ſtates of viſible objects,

jects, on account of an obſcure reſemblance which the organs of voice are capable of aſſuming to ſuch external qualities. By this natural mechaniſm, they imagine all Languages to have been at firſt conſtructed, and the roots of their capital words formed *. LECT. VI.

As

* The Author, who has carried his ſpeculations on this ſubject the fartheſt, is the Preſident Des Broſſes, in his "Traité "de la Formation Mechanique des Langues." Some of the radical letters or ſyllables which he ſuppoſes to carry this expreſſive power in moſt known Languages are, St, to ſignify ſtability or reſt; Fl, to denote fluency; Cl, a gentle deſcent; R, what relates to rapid motion; C, to cavity or hollowneſs, &c. A century before his time, Dr. Wallis, in his Grammar of the Engliſh Language, had taken notice of theſe ſignificant roots, and repreſented it as a peculiar excellency of our Tongue, that, beyond all others, it expreſſed the nature of the objects which it named, by employing ſounds ſharper, ſofter, weaker, ſtronger, more obſcure, or more ſtridulous, according as the idea which is to be ſuggeſted requires. He gives various examples. Thus; words formed upon St, always denote firmneſs and ſtrength, analogous to the Latin *ſto*; as, ſtand, ſtay, ſtaff, ſtop, ſtout, ſteady, ſtake, ſtamp, ſtallion, ſtately, &c. Words beginning with Str, intimate violent force, and energy, analogous to the Greek στρωνυμι; as, ſtrive, ſtrength, ſtrike, ſtripe, ſtreſs, ſtruggle, ſtride, ſtretch, ſtrip, &c. Thr, implies forcible motion; as, throw, throb, thruſt, through, threaten, thraldom. Wr, obliquity or diſtortion; as, wry, wreſt, wreath, wreſtle, wring, wrong, wrangle, wrath, wrack, &c. Sw, ſilent agitation, or lateral motion; as, ſway, ſwing, ſwerve, ſweep, ſwim. Sl, a gentle fall, or leſs obſervable motion; as, ſlide, ſlip, ſly, ſlit, ſlow, ſlack, ſling. Sp, diſſipation or expanſion; as, ſpread, ſprout, ſprinkle, ſplit, ſpill, ſpring. Terminations in Aſh, indicate ſomething acting nimbly and ſharply;

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As far as this ſyſtem is founded in truth, Language appears to be not altogether arbitrary in its origin. Among the ancient Stoic and Platonic Philoſophers, it was a queſtion much agitated, "Utrum nomina rerum ſint naturâ, an impoſi-"tione? φυσει ἡ θεσει;" by which they meant, Whether words were merely conventional ſymbols; of the riſe of which no account could be given, except the pleaſure of the firſt inventors of Language? or, Whether there was ſome principle in nature that led to the aſſignation of particular names to particular objects? and thoſe of the Platonic ſchool favoured the latter opinion *.

THIS

ſharply; as, craſh, gaſh, raſh, flaſh, laſh, ſlaſh. Terminations in Uſh, ſomething acting more obtuſely and dully; as, cruſh, bruſh, huſh, guſh, bluſh. The learned Author produces a great many more examples of the ſame kind, which ſeem to leave no doubt, that the analogies of ſound have had ſome influence on the formation of words. At the ſame time, in all ſpeculations of this kind, there is ſo much room for fancy to operate, that they ought to be adopted with much caution in forming any general theory.

* Vid. Plat. in Cratylo. "Nomina verbaque non poſita for-"tuito, ſed quadam vi & ratione naturæ facta eſſe, P. Nigidius "in Grammaticis Commentariis docet; rem ſane in philo-"ſophiæ diſſertationibus celebrem. In eam rem multa argu-"menta dicit, cur videri poſſint verba eſſe naturalia, magis "quàm arbitraria. *Vos*, inquit, cum dicimus, motu quodam "oris conveniente, cum ipſius verbi demonſtratione utimur, & "labias ſenſim primores emovemus, ac ſpiritum atque animam "porro verſum, & ad eos quibus conſermocinamur intendimus. "At

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THIS principle, however, of a natural relation between words and objects, can only be applied to Language in its moſt ſimple and primitive ſtate. Though, in every tongue, ſome remains of it, as I have ſhown above, can be traced, it were utterly in vain to ſearch for it throughout the whole conſtruction of any modern Language. As the multitude of terms increaſe in every nation, and the immenſe field of Language is filled up, words, by a thouſand fanciful and irregular methods of derivation and compoſition, come to deviate widely from the primitive character of their roots, and to loſe all analogy or reſemblance in ſound to the thing ſignified. In this ſtate we now find Language. Words, as we now employ them, taken in the general, may be conſidered as ſymbols, not as imitations; as arbitrary, or inſtituted, not natural ſigns of ideas. But there can be no doubt, I think, that Language, the nearer we remount to its riſe among men, will be found to partake more of a natural expreſſion. As it could be

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" At contra cum dicimus *Nos*, neque profuſo intentoque flatu " vocis, neque projectis labiis pronunciamus; ſed et ſpiritum " et labias quaſi intra noſmet ipſos coërcemus. Hoc ſit idem " et in eo quod dicimus, *tu*, & *ego*, & *mihi*, & *tibi*. Nam " ſicuti cum adnuimus & abnuimus, motus quodam illo vel ca- " pitis, vel oculorum, a natura rei quam ſignificat, non ab- " horret, ita in his vocibus quaſi geſtus quidam oris & ſpiritus " naturalis eſt. Eadem ratio eſt in Græcis quoque vocibus " quam eſſe in noſtris animadvertimus."

A. GELLIUS, Noct. Atticæ, lib. x. cap. 4.

originally

LECT. VI. originally formed on nothing but imitation, it would, in its primitive ſtate, be more pictureſque; much more barren indeed, and narrow in the circle of its terms, than now; but as far as it went, more expreſſive by ſound of the thing ſignified. This, then, may be aſſumed as one character of the firſt ſtate, or beginnings, of Language, among every ſavage tribe.

A SECOND character of Language, in its early ſtate, is drawn from the manner in which words were at firſt pronounced, or uttered, by men. Interjections, I ſhewed, or paſſionate exclamations, were the firſt elements of ſpeech. Men laboured to communicate their feelings to one another, by thoſe expreſſive cries and geſtures which nature taught them. After words, or names of objects, began to be invented, this mode of ſpeaking, by natural ſigns, could not be all at once diſuſed. For Language, in its infancy, muſt have been extremely barren; and there certainly was a period, among all rude nations, when converſation was carried on by a very few words, intermixed with many exclamations and earneſt geſtures. The ſmall ſtock of words which men as yet poſſeſſed, rendered theſe helps abſolutely neceſſary for explaining their conceptions; and rude, uncultivated men, not having always at hand even the few words which they knew, would naturally labour to make themſelves underſtood, by varying their tones of voice, and accompanying their tones with the

the moſt ſignificant geſticulations they could make. At this day, when perſons attempt to ſpeak in any Language which they poſſeſs imperfectly, they have recourſe to all theſe ſupplemental methods, in order to render themſelves more intelligible. The plan too, according to which I have ſhewn, that Language was originally conſtructed, upon reſemblance or analogy, as far as was poſſible, to the thing ſignified, would naturally lead men to utter their words with more emphaſis and force, as long as Language was a ſort of painting by means of ſound. For all thoſe reaſons this may be aſſumed as a principle, that the pronunciation of the earlieſt Languages was accompanied with more geſticulation, and with more and greater inflexions of voice, than what we now uſe; there was more action in it; and it was more upon a crying or ſinging tone. LECT. VI.

To this manner of ſpeaking, neceſſity firſt gave riſe. But we muſt obſerve, that, after this neceſſity had, in a great meaſure, ceaſed, by Language becoming, in proceſs of time, more extenſive and copious, the ancient manner of Speech ſtill ſubſiſted among many nations; and what had ariſen from neceſſity continued to be uſed for ornament. Wherever there was much fire and vivacity in the genius of nations, they were naturally inclined to a mode of converſation which gratified the imagination ſo much; for, an imagination which is warm, is always prone to throw both a great deal of

LECT. VI. of action, and a variety of tones into diſcourſe. Upon this principle, Dr. Warburton accounts for ſo much ſpeaking by action, as we find among the Old Teſtament Prophets; as when Jeremiah breaks the potter's veſſel, in ſight of the people; throws a book into the Euphrates; puts on bonds and yokes; and carries out his houſehold ſtuff; all which, he imagines, might be ſignificant modes of expreſſion, very natural in thoſe ages, when men were accuſtomed to explain themſelves ſo much by actions and geſtures. In like manner among the Northern American tribes, certain motions and actions were found to be much uſed, as explanatory of their meaning, on all their great occaſions of intercourſe with each other; and by the belts and ſtrings of wampum, which they gave and received, they were accuſtomed to declare their meaning, as much as by their diſcourſes.

WITH regard to inflexions of voice, theſe are ſo natural, that, to ſome nations, it has appeared eaſier to expreſs different ideas, by varying the tone with which they pronounced the ſame word, than to contrive words for all their ideas. This is the practice of the Chineſe in particular. The number of words in their Language is ſaid not to be great; but, in ſpeaking, they vary each of their words on no leſs than five different tones, by which they make the ſame word ſignify five different things. This muſt give a great appearance of muſic or ſinging to their Speech. For thoſe inflexions

inflexions of voice which, in the infancy of Language, were no more than harſh or diſſonant cries, muſt, as Language gradually poliſhes, paſs into more ſmooth and muſical ſounds: and hence is formed, what we call, the Proſody of a Language. LECT. VI.

It is remarkable, and deſerves attention, that both in the Greek and Roman Languages, this muſical and geſticulating pronunciation was retained in a very high degree. Without having attended to this, we ſhall be at a loſs in underſtanding ſeveral paſſages of the Claſſics, which relate to the public ſpeaking, and the theatrical entertainments of the Ancients. It appears, from many circumſtances, that the proſody both of the Greeks and Romans was carried much farther than ours, or that they ſpoke with more, and ſtronger, inflexions of voice than we uſe. The quantity of their ſyllables was much more fixed than in any of the modern Languages, and rendered much more ſenſible to the ear in pronouncing them. Beſides quantities, or the difference of ſhort and long, accents were placed upon moſt of their ſyllables, the acute, grave, and circumflex; the uſe of which accents we have now entirely loſt, but which, we know, determined the ſpeaker's voice to riſe or fall. Our modern pronunciation muſt have appeared to them a lifeleſs monotony. The declamation of their orators, and the pronunciation of their actors upon the ſtage, approached to

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the nature of a recitative in muſic; was capable of being marked in notes, and ſupported with inſtruments; as ſeveral learned men have fully proved. And if this was the caſe, as they have ſhewn, among the Romans, the Greeks, it is well known, were ſtill a more muſical people than the Romans, and carried their attention to tone and pronunciation much farther in every public exhibition. Ariſtotle, in his Poëtics, conſiders the muſic of Tragedy as one of its chief and moſt eſſential parts.

THE caſe was parallel with regard to geſtures: for ſtrong tones, and animated geſtures, we may obſerve, always go together. Action is treated of by all the ancient critics, as the chief quality in every public ſpeaker. The action, both of the orators and the players in Greece and Rome, was far more vehement than what we are accuſtomed to. Roſcius would have ſeemed a madman to us. Geſture was of ſuch conſequence upon the ancient ſtage, that there is reaſon for believing, that, on ſome occaſions, the ſpeaking and the acting part were divided, which, according to our ideas, would form a ſtrange exhibition; one player ſpoke the words in the proper tones, while another performed the correſponding motions and geſtures. We learn from Cicero, that it was a conteſt between him and Roſcius, whether he could expreſs a ſentiment in a greater variety of phraſes, or Roſcius in a greater variety of intelligible

ligible ſignificant geſtures. At laſt geſture came to engroſs the ſtage wholly; for, under the reigns of Auguſtus and Tiberius, the favourite entertainment of the public was the pantomime, which was carried on entirely by mute geſticulation. The people were moved, and wept at it, as much as at Tragedies; and the paſſion for it became ſo ſtrong, that laws were obliged to be made, for reſtraining the ſenators from ſtudying the pantomime art. Now, though in declamations and theatrical exhibitions, both tone and geſture were, doubtleſs, carried much farther than in common diſcourſe; yet public ſpeaking, of any kind, muſt, in every country, bear ſome proportion to the manner that is uſed in converſation; and ſuch public entertainments as I have now mentioned, could never have been reliſhed by a nation, whoſe tones and geſtures, in diſcourſe, were as languid as ours.

When the Barbarians ſpread themſelves over the Roman Empire, theſe more phlegmatic nations did not retain the accents, the tones, and geſtures, which neceſſity at firſt introduced, and cuſtom and fancy afterwards ſo long ſupported, in the Greek and Roman languages. As the Latin Tongue was loſt in their idioms, ſo the character of ſpeech and pronunciation began to be changed throughout Europe. Nothing of the ſame attention was paid to the muſic of Language, or to the pomp of declamation, and theatrical action. Both

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converſation and public ſpeaking became more ſimple and plain, ſuch as we now find it; without that enthuſiaſtic mixture of tones and geſtures, which diſtinguiſhed the ancient nations. At the reſtoration of Letters, the genius of Language was ſo much altered, and the manners of the people had become ſo different, that it was no eaſy matter to underſtand what the ancients had ſaid, concerning their declamations and public ſpectacles. Our plain manner of ſpeaking, in theſe northern countries, expreſſes the paſſions with ſufficient energy, to move thoſe who are not accuſtomed to any more vehement manner. But, undoubtedly, more varied tones, and more animated motions, carry a natural expreſſion of warmer feelings. Accordingly, in different modern Languages, the proſody of Speech partakes more of muſic, in proportion to the livelineſs and ſenſibility of the people. A Frenchman both varies his accents, and geſticulates while he ſpeaks, much more than an Engliſhman. An Italian, a great deal more than either. Muſical pronunciation and expreſſive geſture are, to this day, the diſtinction of Italy.

From the pronunciation of Language, let us proceed, in the third place, to conſider the Style of Language in its moſt early ſtate, and its progreſs in this reſpect alſo. As the manner in which men at firſt uttered their words, and maintained converſation, was ſtrong and expreſſive, enforcing their imperfectly expreſſed ideas by cries and geſtures;

tures: ſo the Language which they uſed, could be no other than full of figures and metaphors, not correct indeed, but forcible and pictureſque. LECT. VI.

We are apt, upon a ſuperficial view, to imagine that thoſe modes of expreſſion which are called Figures of Speech are among the chief refinements of Speech, not invented till after Language had advanced to its later periods, and mankind were brought into a poliſhed ſtate; and that, then, they were deviſed by Orators and Rhetoricians. The contrary of this is the truth. Mankind never employed ſo many Figures of Speech, as when they had hardly any words for expreſſing their meaning.

For, firſt, the want of proper names for every object obliged them to uſe one name for many; and, of courſe, to expreſs themſelves by compariſons, metaphors, alluſions, and all thoſe ſubſtituted forms of Speech which render Language figurative. Next, as the objects with which they were moſt converſant, were the ſenſible, material objects around them, names would be given to thoſe objects long before words were invented for ſignifying the diſpoſitions of the mind, or any ſort of moral and intellectual ideas. Hence the early Language of men being entirely made up of words deſcriptive of ſenſible objects, it became, of neceſſity, extremely metaphorical. For, to ſignify any deſire or paſſion, or any act or feeling of the mind,

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they had no preciſe expreſſion which was appropriated to that purpoſe, but were under a neceſſity of painting the emotion or paſſion, which they felt, by alluſion to thoſe ſenſible objects which had moſt relation to it, and which could render it, in ſome ſort, viſible to others.

But it was not neceſſity alone that gave riſe to this figured ſtyle. Other circumſtances alſo, at the commencement of Language, contributed to it. In the infancy of all ſocieties, men are much under the dominion of imagination and paſſion. They live ſcattered and diſperſed: they are unacquainted with the courſe of things; they are, every day, meeting with new and ſtrange objects. Fear and ſurpriſe, wonder and aſtoniſhment, are their moſt frequent paſſions. Their Language will neceſſarily partake of this character of their minds. They will be prone to exaggeration and hyperbole. They will be given to deſcribe every thing with the ſtrongeſt colours, and moſt vehement expreſſions; infinitely more than men living in the advanced and cultivated periods of Society, when their imagination is more chaſtened, their paſſions are more tamed, and a wider experience has rendered the objects of life more familiar to them. Even the manner in which I before ſhewed that the firſt tribes of men uttered their words, would have conſiderable influence on their ſtyle. Wherever ſtrong exclamations, tones, and geſtures, enter much into converſation, the imagination is always more

more exerciſed; a greater effort of fancy and paſſion is excited. Conſequently, the fancy, kept awake, and rendered more ſprightly by this mode of utterance, operates upon ſtyle, and enlivens it more. LECT. VI.

THESE reaſonings are confirmed by undoubted facts. The ſtyle of all the moſt early Languages, among nations who are in the firſt and rude periods of Society, is found, without exception, to be full of figures; hyperbolical and pictureſque in a high degree. We have a ſtriking inſtance of this in the American Languages, which are known, by the moſt authentic accounts, to be figurative to exceſs. The Iroquois and Illinois carry on their treaties and public tranſactions with bolder metaphors, and greater pomp of ſtyle, than we uſe in our poetical productions *.

ANOTHER

* Thus, to give an inſtance of the ſingular ſtyle of theſe nations, the Five Nations of Canada, when entering on a treaty of peace with us, expreſſed themſelves by their chiefs in the following Language: "We are happy in having buried under ground the "red axe, that has ſo often been dyed with the blood of our "brethren. Now, in this ſort, we inter the axe, and plant the "tree of Peace. We plant a tree, whoſe top will reach the Sun; "and its branches ſpread abroad, ſo that it ſhall be ſeen afar off. "May its growth never be ſtifled and choked; but may it ſhade "both your country and ours with its leaves! Let us make "faſt its roots, and extend them to the utmoſt of your colonies. "If the French ſhould come to ſhake this tree, we would know "it by the motion of its roots reaching into our country. May "the Great Spirit allow us to reſt in tranquillity upon our mats,

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ANOTHER remarkable inſtance is, the ſtyle of the Old Teſtament, which is carried on by conſtant alluſions to ſenſible objects. Iniquity, or guilt, is expreſſed by "a ſpotted garment;" miſery, by "drinking the cup of aſtoniſhment;" vain purſuits, by "feeding on aſhes;" a ſinful life, by "a crooked path;" proſperity, by "the candle of the Lord "ſhining on our head;" and the like, in innumerable inſtances. Hence we have been accuſtomed to call this ſort of ſtyle the Oriental Style; as fancying it to be peculiar to the nations of the Eaſt; whereas, from the American ſtyle, and from many other inſtances, it plainly appears not to have been peculiar to any one region or climate; but to have been common to all nations in certain periods of Society and Language.

HENCE we may receive ſome light concerning that ſeeming paradox, that Poetry is more ancient than Proſe. I ſhall have occaſion to diſcuſs this

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"and never again dig up the axe to cut down the tree of Peace: "Let the earth be trod hard over it, where it lies buried. Let "a ſtrong ſtream run under the pit, to waſh the evil away out of "our ſight and remembrance. The fire that had long burned in "Albany is extinguiſhed. The bloody bed is waſhed clean, and "the tears are wiped from our eyes. We now renew the cove-"nant chain of friendſhip. Let it be kept bright and clean as "ſilver, and not ſuffered to contract any ruſt. Let not any one "pull away his arm from it." Theſe paſſages are extracted from Cadwallader Colden's Hiſtory of the Five Indian Nations: where it appears, from the authentic documents he produces, that ſuch is their genuine ſtyle.

point

point fully hereafter, when I come to treat of the Nature and Origin of Poetry. At preſent, it is ſufficient to obſerve, that from what has been ſaid it plainly appears, that the ſtyle of all Language muſt have been originally poetical; ſtrongly tinctured with that enthuſiaſm, and that deſcriptive metaphorical expreſſion, which diſtinguiſhes Poetry. LECT. VI.

As Language, in its progreſs, began to grow more copious, it gradually loſt that figurative ſtyle which was its early character. When men were furniſhed with proper and familiar names for every object, both ſenſible and moral, they were not obliged to uſe ſo many circumlocutions. Style became more preciſe, and, of courſe, more ſimple. Imagination too, in proportion as Society advanced, had leſs influence over mankind. The vehement manner of ſpeaking by tones and geſtures began to be diſuſed. The underſtanding was more exerciſed; the fancy, leſs. Intercourſe among mankind becoming more extenſive and frequent, clearneſs of ſtyle, in ſignifying their meaning to each other, was the chief object of attention. In place of Poets, Philoſophers became the inſtructors of men; and, in their reaſonings on all different ſubjects, introduced that plainer and ſimpler ſtyle of compoſition, which we now call Proſe. Among the Greeks, Pherecydes of Scyros, the maſter of Pythagoras, is recorded to have been the firſt, who, in this ſenſe, compoſed any writing in proſe. The ancient metaphorical and poetical dreſs of Language was now

SECT. VI. laid aside from the intercourse of men, and reserved for those occasions only on which ornament was professedly studied.

THUS I have pursued the History of Language through some of the variations it has undergone: I have considered it, in the first structure and composition of words; in the manner of uttering or pronouncing words; and in the style and character of Speech. I have yet to consider it in another view, respecting the order and arrangement of words; when we shall find a progress to have taken place, similar to what I have been now illustrating.

LECTURE VII.

RISE AND PROGRESS OF LANGUAGE, AND OF WRITING.

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WHEN we attend to the order in which words are arranged in a ſentence, or ſignificant propoſition, we find a very remarkable difference between the antient and the modern Tongues. The conſideration of this will ſerve to unfold farther the genius of Language, and to ſhew the cauſes of thoſe alterations which it has undergone in the progreſs of Society.

IN order to conceive diſtinctly the nature of that alteration of which I now ſpeak, let us go back, as we did formerly, to the moſt early period of Language. Let us figure to ourſelves a Savage, who beholds ſome object, ſuch as fruit, which raiſes his deſire, and who requeſts another to give it to him. Suppoſing our Savage to be unacquainted with words, he would, in that caſe, labour to make himſelf be underſtood, by pointing earneſtly at the object which he deſired, and uttering,

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at the ſame time a paſſionate cry. Suppoſing him to have acquired words, the firſt word which he uttered would, of courſe, be the name of that object. He would not expreſs himſelf, according to our Engliſh order of conſtruction, "Give me "fruit;" but, according to the Latin order, "Fruit give me;" "Fructum da mihi:" For this plain reaſon, that his attention was wholly directed towards fruit, the deſired object. This was the exciting idea; the object which moved him to ſpeak; and of courſe, would be the firſt named. Such an arrangement is preciſely putting into words the geſture which nature taught the Savage to make, before he was acquainted with words; and therefore it may be depended upon as certain, that he would fall moſt readily into this arrangement.

ACCUSTOMED now to a different method of ordering our words, we call this an inverſion, and conſider it as a forced and unnatural order of Speech. But though not the moſt logical, it is, however, in one view, the moſt natural order; becauſe, it is the order ſuggeſted by imagination and deſire, which always impel us to mention their object in the firſt place. We might therefore conclude, *à priori*, that this would be the order in which words were moſt commonly arranged at the beginnings of Language; and accordingly we find, in fact, that, in this order, words are arranged in moſt of the antient tongues; as in the Greek and

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the Latin; and it is ſaid alſo, in the Ruſſian, the Sclavonic, the Gaëlic, and ſeveral of the American tongues. LECT. VII.

In the Latin Language, the arrangement which moſt commonly obtains, is, to place firſt in the ſentence that word which expreſſes the principal object of the diſcourſe, together with its circumſtances; and afterwards, the perſon, or the thing that acts upon it. Thus Salluſt, comparing together the mind and the body; "Animi imperio, corporis "ſervitio, magis utimur;" which order certainly renders the ſentence more lively and ſtriking than when it is arranged according to our Engliſh conſtruction; "We make moſt uſe of the direction of "the ſoul, and of the ſervice of the body." The Latin order gratifies more the rapidity of the imagination, which naturally runs firſt to that which is its chief object; and having once named it, carries it in view throughout the reſt of the ſentence. In the ſame manner in poetry:

Juſtum & tenacem propoſiti virum,
Non civium ardor prava jubentium,
Non vultus inſtantis tyranni,
Mente quatit ſolida.——

Every perſon of taſte muſt be ſenſible, that here the words are arranged with a much greater regard to the figure which the ſeveral objects make in the fancy, than our Engliſh conſtruction admits; which would require the "Juſtum & tenacem propoſiti "virum,"

LECT. VII. "virum," though, undoubtedly, the capital object in the ſentence, to be thrown into the laſt place.

I HAVE ſaid, that, in the Greek and Roman Languages, the moſt common arrangement is, to place that firſt which ſtrikes the imagination of the ſpeaker moſt. I do not, however, pretend, that this holds without exception. Sometimes regard to the harmony of the period requires a different order; and in languages ſuſceptible of ſo much muſical beauty, and pronounced with ſo much tone and modulation as were uſed by thoſe nations, the harmony of periods was an object carefully ſtudied. Sometimes, too, attention to the perſpicuity, to the force, or to the artful ſuſpenſion of the ſpeaker's meaning, alter this order; and produce ſuch varieties in the arrangement, that it is not eaſy to reduce them to any one principle. But, in general, this was the genius and character of moſt of the antient Languages, to give ſuch full liberty to the collocation of words, as allowed them to aſſume whatever order was moſt agreeable to the ſpeaker's imagination. The Hebrew is indeed an exception: which, though not altogether without inverſions, yet employs them leſs frequently, and approaches nearer to the Engliſh conſtruction than either the Greek or the Latin.

ALL the modern Languages of Europe have adopted a different arrangement from the antient. In their proſe compoſitions, very little variety is admitted

admitted in the collocation of words; they are moſtly fixed to one order; and that order is, what may be called the Order of the Underſtanding. They place firſt in the ſentence, the perſon or thing which ſpeaks or acts; next, its action; and laſtly the object of its action. So that the ideas are made to ſucceed to one another, not according to the degree of importance which the ſeveral objects carry in the imagination, but according to the order of nature and of time. LECT. VII.

An Engliſh writer, paying a compliment to a great man, would ſay thus: "It is impoſſible for "me to paſs over in ſilence ſuch remarkable mild-"neſs, ſuch ſingular and unheard of clemency, "and ſuch unuſual moderation, in the exerciſe of "ſupreme power." Here we have firſt preſented to us the perſon who ſpeaks, "It is impoſſible for "*me*;" next, what that perſon is to do, "impoſ-"ſible for him *to paſs over in ſilence*;" and laſtly, the object which moves him ſo to do, "the mild-"neſs, clemency, and moderation of his patron." Cicero, from whom I have tranſlated theſe words, juſt reverſes this order; beginning with the object, placing that firſt which was the exciting idea in the ſpeaker's mind, and ending with the ſpeaker and his action. "Tantam manſuetudinem, tam inuſi-"tatam inauditamque clementiam, tantumque in "ſumma poteſtate rerum omnium modum, tacitus "nullo modo præterire poſſum." (Orat. pro Marcell.)

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THE Latin order is more animated; the Engliſh more clear and diſtinct. The Romans generally arranged their words according to the order in which the ideas roſe in the ſpeaker's imagination. We arrange them according to the order in which the underſtanding directs thoſe ideas to be exhibited, in ſucceſſion, to the view of another. Our arrangement, therefore, appears to be the conſequence of greater refinement in the art of Speech; as far as clearneſs in communication is underſtood to be the end of Speech.

IN poetry, where we are ſuppoſed to riſe above the ordinary ſtyle, and to ſpeak the Language of fancy and paſſion, our arrangement is not altogether ſo limited; but ſome greater liberty is allowed for tranſpoſition and inverſion. Even there, however, that liberty is confined within narrow bounds, in compariſon of the antient Languages. The different modern Tongues vary from one another, in this reſpect. The French Language is, of them all, the moſt determinate in the order of its words, and admits the leaſt of inverſion, either in proſe or poetry. The Engliſh admits it more. But the Italian retains the moſt of the antient tranſpoſitive character; though one is apt to think it attended with a little obſcurity in the ſtyle of ſome of their authors, who deal moſt in theſe tranſpoſitions.

IT is proper, next, to obſerve, that there is one circumſtance in the ſtructure of all the modern Tongues,

Tongues, which, if neceſſary, limits their arrange- LECT. VII.
ment, in a great meaſure, to one fixed and deter-
minate train. We have diſuſed thoſe differences of termination, which, in the Greek and Latin, diſtinguiſhed the ſeveral caſes of nouns, and tenſes of verbs; and which, thereby, pointed out the mutual relation of the ſeveral words in a ſentence to one another, though the related words were disjoined, and placed in different parts of the ſentence. This is an alteration in the ſtructure of Language, of which I ſhall have occaſion to ſay more in the next Lecture. One obvious effect of it is, that we have now, for the moſt part, no way left us to ſhew the cloſe relation of any two words to each other in meaning, but by placing them cloſe to one another in the period. For inſtance, the Romans could, with propriety, expreſs themſelves thus:

> Extinctum nymphæ crudeli funere Daphnim
> Flebant.——

Becauſe "Extinctum & Daphnim," being both in the accuſative caſe, this ſhowed, that the adjective and the ſubſtantive were related to each other, though placed at the two extremities of the line; and that both were governed by the active verb "Flebant," to which "Nymphæ" plainly appeared to be the nominative. The different terminations here reduced all into order, and made the connection of the ſeveral words perfectly clear. But let us tranſlate theſe words literally into Engliſh,

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according to the Latin arrangement; "Dead the "nymphs by a cruel fate Daphnis lamented;" and they become a perfect riddle, in which it is impoſſible to find any meaning.

It was by means of this contrivance, which obtained in almoſt all the antient Languages of varying the termination of the nouns and verbs, and thereby pointing out the concordance, and the government of the words, in a ſentence, that they enjoyed ſo much liberty of tranſpoſition, and could marſhal and arrange their words in any way that gratified the imagination, or pleaſed the ear. When Language came to be modelled by the northern nations who overran the empire, they dropped the caſes of nouns, and the different termination of verbs, with the more eaſe, becauſe they placed no great value upon the advantages ariſing from ſuch a ſtructure of Language. They were attentive only to clearneſs, and copiouſneſs of expreſſion. They neither regarded much the harmony of ſound, nor ſought to gratify the imagination by the collocation of words. They ſtudied ſolely to expreſs themſelves in ſuch a manner as ſhould exhibit their ideas to others in the moſt diſtinct and intelligible order. And hence, if our Language, by reaſon of the ſimple arrangement of its words, poſſeſſes leſs harmony, leſs beauty, and leſs force, than the Greek or Latin; it is, however, in its meaning, more obvious and plain.

Thus

THUS I have ſhown what the natural progreſs of Language has been, in ſeveral material articles; and this account of the Genius and Progreſs of Language lays a foundation for many obſervations, both curious and uſeful. From what has been ſaid in this, and the preceding Lecture, it appears, that Language was, at firſt, barren in words, but deſcriptive by the ſound of theſe words; and expreſſive in the manner of uttering them, by the aid of ſignificant tones and geſtures: Style was figurative and poetical: Arrangement was fanciful and lively. It appears, that, in all the ſucceſſive changes which Language has undergone, as the world advanced, the underſtanding has gained ground on the fancy and imagination. The Progreſs of Language, in this reſpect, reſembles the progreſs of age in man. The imagination is moſt vigorous and predominant in youth; with advancing years, the imagination cools, and the underſtanding ripens. Thus Language, proceeding from ſterility to copiouſneſs, hath, at the ſame time, proceeded from vivacity to accuracy; from fire and enthuſiaſm, to coolneſs and preciſion. Thoſe characters of early Language, deſcriptive ſound, vehement tones and geſtures, figurative ſtyle, and inverted arrangement, all hang together, have a mutual influence on each other; and have all gradually given place to arbitrary ſounds, calm pronunciation, ſimple ſtyle, plain arrangement. Language is become, in modern times, more correct, indeed, and accurate; but, however, leſs

LECT. VII. ſtriking and animated: in its antient ſtate, more favourable to poetry and oratory; in its preſent, to reaſon and philoſophy.

HAVING finiſhed my account of the Progreſs of Speech, I proceed to give an account of the Progreſs of Writing, which next demands our notice; though it will not require ſo full a diſcuſſion as the former ſubject.

NEXT to Speech, Writing is, beyond doubt, the moſt uſeful art which men poſſeſs. It is plainly an improvement upon Speech, and therefore muſt have been poſterior to it in order of time. At firſt, men thought of nothing more than communicating their thoughts to one another, when preſent, by means of words, or ſounds, which they uttered. Afterwards, they deviſed this further method, of mutual communication with one another, when abſent, by means of marks or characters preſented to the eye, which we call Writing.

WRITTEN characters are of two ſorts. They are either ſigns for things, or ſigns for words. Of the former ſort, ſigns of things, are the pictures, hieroglyphics, and ſymbols, employed by the antient nations; of the latter ſort, ſigns for words, are the alphabetical characters, now employed by all Europeans. Theſe two kinds of writing are generically, and eſſentially diſtinct.

PICTURES

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PICTURES were, undoubtedly, the firſt eſſay towards Writing. Imitation is ſo natural to man, that, in all ages, and among all nations, ſome methods have obtained, of copying or tracing the likeneſs of ſenſible objects. Thoſe methods would ſoon be employed by men for giving ſome imperfect information to others, at a diſtance, of what had happened; or, for preſerving the memory of facts which they ſought to record. Thus, to ſignify that one man had killed another, they drew the figure of one man ſtretched upon the earth, and of another ſtanding by him with a deadly weapon in his hand. We find, in fact, that when America was firſt diſcovered, this was the only ſort of Writing known in the kingdom of Mexico. By hiſtorical pictures, the Mexicans are ſaid to have tranſmitted the memory of the moſt important tranſactions of their empire. Theſe, however, muſt have been extremely imperfect records; and the nations who had no other, muſt have been very groſs and rude. Pictures could do no more than delineate external events. They could neither exhibit the connections of them, nor deſcribe ſuch qualities as were not viſible to the eye, nor convey any idea of the diſpoſitions, or words, of men.

To ſupply, in ſome degree, this defect, there aroſe, in proceſs of time, the invention of what are called, Hieroglyphical Characters; which may be conſidered as the ſecond ſtage of the art of Writing. Hieroglyphics conſiſt in certain ſym-

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bols, which are made to ſtand for inviſible objects, on account of an analogy or reſemblance which ſuch ſymbols were ſuppoſed to bear to the objects. Thus, an eye was the hieroglyphical ſymbol of knowledge; a circle, of eternity, which has neither beginning, nor end. Hieroglyphics, therefore, were a more refined and extenſive ſpecies of painting. Pictures delineated the reſemblance of external viſible objects. Hieroglyphics painted inviſible objects, by analogies taken from the external world.

AMONG the Mexicans were found ſome traces of hieroglyphical characters, intermixed with their hiſtorical pictures. But Egypt was the country where this ſort of Writing was moſt ſtudied and brought into a regular art. In hieroglyphics was conveyed all the boaſted wiſdom of their prieſts. According to the properties which they aſcribed to animals, or the qualities with which they ſuppoſed natural objects to be endowed, they pitched upon them to be the emblems, or hieroglyphics, of moral objects; and employed them in their Writing for that end. Thus, ingratitude was denominated by a viper; imprudence, by a fly; wiſdom, by an ant; victory, by a hawk; a dutiful child, by a ſtork; a man univerſally ſhunned, by an eel, which they ſuppoſed to be found in company with no other fiſh. Sometimes they joined together two or more of theſe hieroglyphical characters; as, a ſerpent with a hawk's head; to denote nature, with God preſiding over it. But, as many of thoſe properties

properties of objects which they assumed for the foundation of their hieroglyphics, were merely imaginary, and the allusions drawn from them were forced and ambiguous; as the conjunction of their characters rendered them still more obscure, and must have expressed very indistinctly the connections and relations of things; this sort of writing could be no other than ænigmatical, and confused in the highest degree; and must have been a very imperfect vehicle of knowledge of any kind. LECT. VII.

It has been imagined, that hieroglyphics were an invention of the Egyptian priests, for concealing their learning from common view; and that, upon this account, it was preferred by them to the alphabetical method of Writing. But this is certainly a mistake. Hieroglyphics were, undoubtedly, employed, at first, from necessity, not from choice or refinement; and would never have been thought of, if alphabetical characters had been known. The nature of the invention plainly shews it to have been one of those gross and rude essays towards Writing, which were adopted in the early ages of the world; in order to extend farther the first method which they had employed of simple pictures, or representations of visible objects. Indeed, in after times, when alphabetical Writing was introduced into Egypt, and the hieroglyphical was, of course, fallen into disuse, it is known, that the priests still employed the hieroglyphical characters, as a sacred kind of Writing, now become peculiar to themselves, and serving to give an air

LECT. VII. of myſtery to their learning and religion. In this ſtate, the Greeks found hieroglyphical Writing, when they began to have intercourſe with Egypt; and ſome of their writers miſtook this uſe, to which they found it applied, for the cauſe that had given riſe to the invention.

As Writing advanced, from pictures of viſible objects, to hieroglyphics, or ſymbols of things inviſible; from theſe latter, it advanced, among ſome nations, to ſimple arbitrary marks which ſtood for objects, though without any reſemblance or analogy to the objects ſignified. Of this nature was the method of writing practiſed among the Peruvians. They made uſe of ſmall cords, of different colours; and by knots upon theſe, of various ſizes, and differently ranged, they contrived ſigns for giving information, and communicating their thoughts to one another.

Of this nature alſo, are the written characters which are uſed to this day throughout the great empire of China. The Chineſe have no alphabet of letters, or ſimple ſounds, which compoſe their words. But every ſingle character which they uſe in Writing, is ſignificant of an idea; it is a mark which ſtands for ſome one thing or object. By conſequence, the number of theſe characters muſt be immenſe. It muſt correſpond to the whole number of objects or ideas, which they have occaſion to expreſs; that is, to the whole number of words which they employ in Speech: nay,

nay, it muſt be greater than the number of words; one word, by varying the tone, with which it is ſpoken, may be made to ſignify ſeveral different things. They are ſaid to have ſeventy thouſand of thoſe written characters. To read and write them to perfection, is the ſtudy of a whole life; which ſubjects learning, among them, to infinite diſadvantage; and muſt have greatly retarded the progreſs of all ſcience. LECT. VII.

CONCERNING the origin of theſe Chineſe characters, there have been different opinions, and much controverſy. According to the moſt probable accounts, the Chineſe Writing began, like the Egyptian, with pictures, and hieroglyphical figures. Theſe figures being, in progreſs, abbreviated in their form, for the ſake of writing them eaſily, and greatly enlarged in their number, paſſed, at length, into thoſe marks or characters which they now uſe, and which have ſpread themſelves through ſeveral nations of the eaſt. For we are informed, that the Japaneſe, the Tonquineſe, and the Coreans, who ſpeak different languages from one another, and from the inhabitants of China, uſe, however, the ſame written characters with them; and, by this means, correſpond intelligibly with each other in Writing, though ignorant of the Language ſpoken in their ſeveral countries; a plain proof, that the Chineſe characters are, like hieroglyphics, independent of Language; are ſigns of things, not of words.

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We have one inſtance of this ſort of Writing in Europe. Our cyphers, as they are called, or arithmetical figures, 1, 2, 3, 4, &c, which we have derived from the Arabians, are ſignificant marks preciſely of the ſame nature with the Chineſe characters. They have no dependence on words; but each figure denotes an object; denotes the number for which it ſtands; and, accordingly, on being preſented to the eye, is equally underſtood by all the nations who have agreed in the uſe of theſe cyphers; by Italians, Spaniards, French, and Engliſh, however different the Languages of thoſe nations are from one another, and whatever different names they give, in their reſpective Languages, to each numerical cypher.

As far, then, as we have yet advanced, nothing has appeared which reſembles our letters, or which can be called Writing, in the ſenſe we now give to that term. What we have hitherto ſeen, were all direct ſigns for things, and made no uſe of the medium of ſound, or words; either ſigns by repreſentation, as the Mexican pictures; or ſigns by analogy, as the Egyptian hieroglyphics; or ſigns by inſtitution, as the Peruvian knots, the Chineſe characters, and the Arabian cyphers.

At length, in different nations, men became ſenſible of the imperfection, the ambiguity, and the tediouſneſs of each of theſe methods of communication with one another. They began to conſider,

conſider, that by employing ſigns which ſhould ſtand not directly for things, but for the words which they uſed in Speech for naming theſe things, a conſiderable advantage would be gained. For they reflected farther, that though the number of words in every Language be, indeed, very great, yet the number of articulate ſounds, which are uſed in compoſing theſe words, is comparatively ſmall. The ſame ſimple ſounds are continually recurring and repeated; and are combined together, in various ways, for forming all the variety of words which we utter. They bethought themſelves, therefore, of inventing ſigns, not for each word, by itſelf, but for each of thoſe ſimple ſounds which we employ in forming our words; and by joining together a few of thoſe ſigns, they ſaw that it would be practicable to expreſs, in Writing, the whole combinations of ſounds which our words require. LECT. VII.

THE firſt ſtep, in this new progreſs, was the invention of an alphabet of ſyllables, which probably preceded the invention of an alphabet of letters, among ſome of the ancient nations; and which is ſaid to be retained, to this day, in Æthiopia, and ſome countries of India. By fixing upon a particular mark, or character, for every ſyllable in the Language, the number of characters, neceſſary to be uſed in Writing, was reduced within a much ſmaller compaſs than the number of words in the Language. Still, however, the number of cha-

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racters was great; and muſt have continued to render both reading and writing very laborious arts. Till, at laſt, ſome happy genius aroſe; and tracing the ſounds made by the human voice, to their moſt ſimple elements, reduced them to a very few vowels and conſonants; and by affixing to each of theſe the ſigns which we now call Letters, taught men how, by their combinations, to put in Writing all the different words, or combinations of ſound, which they employed in Speech. By being reduced to this ſimplicity, the art of Writing was brought to its higheſt ſtate of perfection; and, in this ſtate, we now enjoy it in all the countries of Europe.

To whom we are indebted for this ſublime and refined diſcovery, does not appear. Concealed by the darkneſs of remote antiquity, the great inventor is deprived of thoſe honours which would ſtill be paid to his memory, by all the lovers of knowledge and learning. It appears from the books which Moſes has written, that among the Jews, and probably among the Egyptians, letters had been invented prior to his age. The univerſal tradition among the ancients is, that they were firſt imported into Greece by Cadmus the Phœnician; who, according to the common ſyſtem of chronology, was contemporary with Joſhua; according to Sir Iſaac Newton's ſyſtem, contemporary with King David. As the Phœnicians are not known to have been the inventors of any art or ſcience, though

though, by means of their extenſive commerce, they propagated the diſcoveries made by other nations, the moſt propable and natural account of the origin of alphabetical characters is, that they took riſe in Egypt, the firſt civilized kingdom of which we have any authentic accounts, and the great ſource of arts and polity among the ancients. In that country, the favourite ſtudy of hieroglyphical characters had directed much attention to the art of Writing. Their hieroglyphics are known to have been intermixed with abbreviated ſymbols, and arbitrary marks; whence, at laſt, they caught the idea of contriving marks, not for things merely, but for ſounds. Accordingly, Plato (in Phædo) expreſsly attributes the invention of letters to Theuth, the Egyptian, who is ſuppoſed to have been the Hermes, or Mercury, of the Greeks. Cadmus himſelf, though he paſſed from Phœnicia to Greece, yet is affirmed, by ſeveral of the ancients, to have been originally of Thebes in Egypt. Moſt probably, Moſes carried with him the Egyptian letters into the land of Canaan; and there being adopted by the Phœnicians, who inhabited part of that country, they were tranſmitted into Greece. LECT. VII.

The alphabet which Cadmus brought into Greece was imperfect, and is ſaid to have contained only ſixteen letters. The reſt were afterwards added, according as ſigns for proper ſounds were found to be wanting. It is curious to obſerve, that

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that the letters which we uſe at this day, can be traced back to this very alphabet of Cadmus. The Roman alphabet, which obtains with us, and with moſt of the European nations, is plainly formed on the Greek, with a few variations. And all learned men obſerve, that the Greek characters, eſpecially according to the manner in which they are formed in the oldeſt inſcriptions, have a remarkable conformity to the Hebrew or Samaritan characters, which, it is agreed, are the ſame with the Phœnician, or alphabet of Cadmus. Invert the Greek characters from left to right, according to the Phœnician and Hebrew manner of Writing, and they are nearly the ſame. Beſides the conformity of figure, the names or denominations of the letters, alpha, beta, gamma, &c. and the order in which the letters are arranged, in all the ſeveral alphabets, Phœnician, Hebrew, Greek, and Roman, agree ſo much, as amounts to a demonſtration, that they were all derived originally from the ſame ſource. An invention ſo uſeful and ſimple was greedily received by mankind, and propagated with ſpeed and facility through many different nations.

THE letters were, originally, written from the right hand towards the left; that is, in a contrary order to what we now practiſe. This manner of Writing obtained among the Aſſyrians, Phœnicians, Arabians, and Hebrews; and from ſome very old inſcriptions, appears to have obtained alſo

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alſo among the Greeks. Afterwards, the Greeks adopted a new method, writing their lines alternately from the right to the left, and from the left to the right, which was called *Bouſtrophedon*; or, writing after the manner in which oxen plow the ground. Of this, ſeveral ſpecimens ſtill remain; particularly, the inſcription on the famous Sigæan monument; and down to the days of Solon, the legiſlator of Athens, this continued to be the common method of Writing. At length, the motion from the left hand to the right being found more natural and commodious, the practice of Writing in this direction prevailed throughout all the countries of Europe.

WRITING was long a kind of engraving. Pillars, and tables of ſtone, were firſt employed for this purpoſe, and afterwards, plates of the ſofter metals, ſuch as lead. In proportion as Writing became more common, lighter and more portable ſubſtances were employed. The leaves, and the bark of certain trees, were uſed in ſome countries; and in others, tablets of wood, covered with a thin coat of ſoft wax, on which the impreſſion was made with a ſtylus of iron. In later times, the hides of animals, properly prepared, and poliſhed into parchment, were the moſt common materials. Our preſent method of writing on paper, is an invention of no greater antiquity than the fourteenth century.

THUS

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THUS I have given ſome account of the Progreſs of theſe two great arts, Speech and Writing; by which men's thoughts are communicated, and the foundation laid for all knowledge and improvement. Let us conclude the ſubject, with comparing in a few words, ſpoken Language, and written Language; or words uttered in our hearing, with words repreſented to the eye; where we ſhall find ſeveral advantages and diſadvantages to be balanced on both ſides.

THE advantages of Writing above Speech are, that Writing is both a more extenſive, and a more permanent method of communication. More extenſive; as it is not confined within the narrow circle of thoſe who hear our words; but, by means of written characters, we can ſend our thoughts abroad, and propagate them through the world; we can lift our voice, ſo as to ſpeak to the moſt diſtant regions of the earth. More permanent alſo, as it prolongs this voice to the moſt diſtant ages; it gives us the means of recording our ſentiments to futurity, and of perpetuating the inſtructive memory of paſt tranſactions. It likewiſe affords this advantage to ſuch as read, above ſuch as hear, that, having the written characters before their eyes, they can arreſt the ſenſe of the writer. They can pauſe, and revolve, and compare at their leiſure, one paſſage with another; whereas, the voice is fugitive and paſſing; you muſt catch the words the moment they are uttered, or you loſe them for ever.

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But, although theſe be ſo great advantages of written Language, that Speech, without Writing, would have been very inadequate for the inſtruction of mankind: yet we muſt not forget to obſerve, that ſpoken Language has a great ſuperiority over written Language, in point of energy or force. The voice of the living Speaker makes an impreſſion on the mind, much ſtronger than can be made by the peruſal of any Writing. The tones of voice, the looks and geſtures which accompany diſcourſe, and which no Writing can convey, render diſcourſe, when it is well managed, infinitely more clear, and more expreſſive, than the moſt accurate Writing. For tones, looks, and geſtures, are natural interpreters of the ſentiments of the mind. They remove ambiguities; they enforce impreſſions; they operate on us by means of ſympathy, which is one of the moſt powerful inſtruments of perſuaſion. Our ſympathy is always awakened more by hearing the Speaker, than by reading his works in our cloſet. Hence, though Writing may anſwer the purpoſes of mere inſtruction, yet all the great and high efforts of eloquence muſt be made, by means of ſpoken, not of written, Language.

LECTURE VIII.

STRUCTURE OF LANGUAGE.

LECT. VIII.

AFTER having given an account of the Riſe and Progreſs of Language, I proceed to treat of its Structure, or of General Grammar. The Structure of Language is extremely artificial; and there are few ſciences in which a deeper, or more refined logic is employed, than in grammar. It is apt to be ſlighted by ſuperficial thinkers, as belonging to thoſe rudiments of knowledge, which were inculcated upon us in our earlieſt youth. But what was then inculcated before we could comprehend its principles, would abundantly repay our ſtudy in maturer years; and to the ignorance of it, muſt be attributed many of thoſe fundamental defects which appear in writing.

FEW authors have written with philoſophical accuracy on the principles of General Grammar; and, what is more to be regretted, fewer ſtill have thought of applying thoſe principles to the Engliſh Language. While the French tongue has

long been an object of attention to many able and ingenious writers of that nation, who have conſidered its conſtruction, and determined its propriety with great accuracy, the Genius and Grammar of the Engliſh, to the reproach of the country, have not been ſtudied with equal care, or aſcertained with the ſame preciſion. Attempts have been made, indeed, of late, towards ſupplying this defect; and ſome able writers have entered on the ſubject: but much remains yet to be done. LEC. VIII.

I DO not propoſe to give any ſyſtem, either of Grammar in general, or of Engliſh Grammar in particular. A minute diſcuſſion of the niceties of Language would carry us too much off from other objects, which demand our attention in the courſe of Lectures. But I propoſe to give a general view of the chief principles relating to this ſubject, in obſervations on the ſeveral parts of which Speech or Language is compoſed; remarking as I go along, the peculiarities of our own Tongue. After which, I ſhall make ſome more particular remarks on the Genius of the Engliſh Language.

THE firſt thing to be conſidered, is the diviſion of the ſeveral parts of ſpeech. The eſſential parts of Speech are the ſame in all Languages. There muſt always be ſome words which denote the names of objects, or mark the ſubject of diſcourſe; other words, which denote the qualities of thoſe objects, and expreſs what we affirm concerning them;

SECT. VIII. them; and other words, which point out their connections and relations. Hence, ſubſtantives, pronouns, adjectives, verbs, prepoſitions, and conjunctions, muſt neceſſarily be found in all Languages. The moſt ſimple and comprehenſive diviſion of the parts of Speech is, into ſubſtantives, attributives, and connectives*. Subſtantives, are all the words which expreſs the names of objects, or the ſubjects of diſcourſe; attributives, are all the words which expreſs any attribute, property, or action of the former; connectives, are what expreſs the connections, relations, and dependencies, which take place among them. The common grammatical diviſion of Speech into eight parts; nouns, pronouns, verbs, participles, adverbs, prepoſitions, interjections, and conjunctions; is not very logical, as might be eaſily ſhewn; as it comprehends under the general term of

* Quinctilian informs us, that this was the moſt antient diviſion. "Tum videbit quot & quæ ſunt partes orationis. "Quanquam de numero parum convenit. Veteres enim, quo- "rum fuerant Ariſtoteles atque Theodectes, verba modo, & "nomina, & convinctiones tradiderunt. Videlicet, quod in "verbis vim ſermonis, in nominibus materiam, (quia alterum "eſt quod loquimur, alterum de quo loquimur,) in convinctio- "nibus autem complexum eorum eſſe judicârunt; quas con- "junctiones a pleriſque dici ſcio; ſed hæc videtur ex συνδεσμα "magis propria tranſlatio. Paulatim a philoſophicis ac maximè "a ſtoicis, auctus eſt numerus; ac primùm convinctionibus "articuli adjecti; poſt præpoſitiones; nominibus, appellatio, "deinde pronomen; deinde miſtum verbo participium; ipſis "verbis, adverbia." Lib. I. cap. iv.

nouns,

nouns, both ſubſtantives and adjectives, which are parts of Speech generically and eſſentially diſtinct; while it makes a ſeparate part of Speech of participles, which are no other than verbal adjectives. However, as theſe are the terms to which our ears have been moſt familiariſed, and as an exact logical diviſion is of no great conſequence to our preſent purpoſe, it will be better to make uſe of theſe known terms than of any other.

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We are naturally led to begin with the conſideration of ſubſtantive nouns, which are the foundation of all Grammar, and may be conſidered as the moſt ancient part of Speech. For, aſſuredly, as ſoon as men had got beyond ſimple interjections, or exclamations of paſſion, and began to communicate themſelves by diſcourſe, they would be under a neceſſity of aſſigning names to the objects they ſaw around them; which in Grammatical Language, is called the Invention of ſubſtantive nouns *. And here at our firſt ſetting out, ſomewhat

* I do not mean to aſſert, that among all Nations, the firſt invented words were ſimple and regular ſubſtantive nouns. Nothing is more difficult than to aſcertain the preciſe ſteps by which men proceeded in the formation of Language. Names for objects muſt, doubtleſs, have ariſen in the moſt early ſtages of Speech. But it is probable, as the learned Author of the Treatiſe, *On the Origin and Progreſs of Language*, has ſhewn (vol. i. p. 371. 395.) that, among ſeveral ſavage tribes, ſome of the firſt articulate ſounds that were formed denoted a whole ſentence rather than

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what curious occurs. The individual objects which ſurround us are infinite in number. A ſavage, wherever he looked, beheld foreſts and trees. To give ſeparate names to every one of thoſe trees, would have been an endleſs and impracticable undertaking. The firſt object was, to give a name to that particular tree, whoſe fruit relieved his hunger, or whoſe ſhade protected him from the ſun. But obſerving, that though other trees were diſtinguiſhed from this by peculiar qualities of ſize or appearance, yet, that they alſo agreed and

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than the name of a particular object; conveying ſome information, or expreſſing ſome deſires or fears, ſuited to the circumſtances in which that tribe was placed, or relating to the buſineſs they had moſt frequent occaſion to carry on; as the lion is coming, the river is ſwelling, &c. Many of their firſt words, it is likewiſe probable, were not ſimple ſubſtantive nouns, but ſubſtantives, accompanied with ſome of thoſe attributes, in conjunction with which they were moſt frequently accuſtomed to behold them; as the great bear, the little hut, the wound made by the hatchet, &c. Of all which the Author produces inſtances from ſeveral of the American Languages; and it is, undoubtedly, ſuitable to the natural courſe of the operations of the human mind thus to begin with particulars the moſt obvious to ſenſe, and to proceed from theſe to more general expreſſions. He likewiſe obſerves, that the words of thoſe primitive Tongues are far from being, as we might ſuppoſe them, rude and ſhort, and crowded with conſonants; but, on the contrary, are, for the moſt part, long words, and full of vowels. This is the conſequence of their being formed upon the natural ſounds which the voice utters with moſt eaſe, a little varied and diſtinguiſhed by articulation; and he ſhews this to hold, in fact, among moſt of the barbarous languages which are known.

reſembled

reſembled one another, in certain common qualities, ſuch as ſpringing from a root, and bearing branches and leaves, he formed in his mind ſome general idea of thoſe common qualities, and ranging all that poſſeſſed them under one claſs of objects, he called that whole claſs, *a tree*. Longer experience taught him to ſubdivide this genus into the ſeveral ſpecies of oak, pine, aſh, and the reſt, according as his obſervation extended to the ſeveral qualities in which theſe trees agreed or differed. SECT. VIII.

But, ſtill, he made uſe only of general terms in Speech. For the oak, the pine, and the aſh, were names of whole claſſes of objects; each of which included an immenſe number of undiſtinguiſhed individuals. Here then it appears, that though the formation of abſtract, or general conceptions, is ſuppoſed to be a difficult operation of the mind; ſuch conceptions muſt have entered into the very firſt formation of Language. For, if we except only the proper names of perſons, ſuch as Cæſar, John, Peter, all the other ſubſtantive nouns which we employ in diſcourſe are the names, not of individual objects, but of very extenſive genera, or ſpecies of objects; as, man, lion, houſe, river, &c. We are not, however, to imagine, that this invention of general, or abſtract terms, requires any great exertion of metaphyſical capacity: for, by whatever ſteps the mind proceeds in it, it is certain, that, when men have once obſerved reſemblances among objects,

LECT. VIII. they are naturally inclined to call all thoſe which reſemble one another by one common name; and of courſe to claſs them under one ſpecies. We may daily obſerve this practiſed by children, in their firſt attempts towards acquiring Language.

BUT now after Language had proceeded as far as I have deſcribed, the notification which it made of objects was ſtill very imperfect: for, when one mentioned to another, in diſcourſe, any ſubſtantive noun, ſuch as, man, lion, or tree, how was it to be known, which man, which lion, or which tree he meant, among the many comprehended under one name? Here occurs a very curious, and a very uſeful contrivance for ſpecifying the individual object intended, by means of that part of Speech called the Article.

THE force of the Article conſiſts, in pointing or ſingling out from the common maſs, the individual of which we mean to ſpeak. In Engliſh, we have two Articles, *a* and *the*; *a* is more general and unlimited; *the* more definite and ſpecial. *A* is much the ſame with *one*, and marks only any one individual of a ſpecies: that individual being either unknown, or left undetermined; as, a lion, a king. *The*, which poſſeſſes more properly the force of the Article, aſcertains ſome known or determined individual of the ſpecies; as, the lion, the king.

ARTICLES

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ARTICLES are words of great uſe in Speech. In ſome Languages, however, they are not found. The Greeks have but one Article, ὁ ἡ τὸ, which anſwers to our definite, or proper Article, *the*. They have no word which anſwers to our Article *a*; but they ſupply its place by the abſence of their Article: Thus, Βασιλευς ſignifies, *a* king; ὁ Βασιλευς *the* king. The Latins have no Article. In the room of it they employ pronouns, as, hic, ille, iſte, for pointing out the objects which they want to diſtinguiſh. "Noſter ſermo," ſays Quinctilian, "articulos non deſiderat, ideoque in "alias partes orationis ſparguntur." This, however, appears to me a defect in the Latin Tongue; as Articles contribute much to the clearneſs and preciſion of Language.

IN order to illuſtrate this, remark what difference there is in the meaning of the following expreſſions in Engliſh, depending wholly on the different employment of the Articles: "The ſon "of a king—The ſon of the king—A ſon of the "king's." Each of theſe three phraſes has an entirely different meaning, which I need not explain, becauſe any one who underſtands the Language conceives it clearly at firſt hearing, through the different application of the Articles, *a* and *the*. Whereas in Latin, "Filius regis" is wholly undetermined; and, to explain in which of theſe three ſenſes it is to be underſtood, for it may bear any of them, a circumlocution of ſeveral words muſt

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be uſed. In the ſame manner, "Are you *a* "king? "Are you *the* king?" are queſtions of quite ſeparate import; which, however, are confounded together in the Latin phraiſe, "eſne tu "rex?" "Thou art *a* man," is a very general and harmleſs poſition; but, "thou art *the* man," is an aſſertion capable, we know, of ſtriking terror and remorſe into the heart. Theſe obſervations illuſtrate the force and importance of Articles: and, at the ſame time, I gladly lay hold of any opportunity of ſhewing the advantages of our own Language.

BESIDES this quality of being particulariſed by the Article, three affections belong to ſubſtantive nouns, number, gender, and caſe, which require our conſideration.

NUMBER diſtinguiſhes them as one, or many, of the ſame kind, called the Singular and Plural; a diſtinction found in all Languages, and which muſt, indeed, have been coëval with the very infancy of Language; as there were few things which men had more frequent occaſion to expreſs, than the difference between one and many. For the greater facility of expreſſing it, it has, in all Languages, been marked by ſome variation made upon the ſubſtantive noun; as we ſee, in Engliſh, our plural is commonly formed by the addition of the letter S. In the Hebrew, Greek, and ſome other antient Languages, we find, not only a plural, but

but a dual number; the riſe of which may very naturally be accounted for, from ſeparate terms of numbering not being yet invented, and one, two, and many, being all, or at leaſt, the chief numeral diſtinctions which men, at firſt, had any occaſion to take notice of. SECT. VIII.

GENDER is an affection of ſubſtantive nouns, which will lead us into more diſcuſſion than number. Gender being founded on the diſtinction of the two ſexes, it is plain, that in a proper ſenſe, it can only find place in the names of living creatures, which admit the diſtinction of male and female; and, therefore, can be ranged under the maſculine or feminine genders. All other ſubſtantive nouns ought to belong, to what grammarians call, the Neuter Gender, which is meant to imply the negation of either ſex. But, with reſpect to this diſtribution, ſomewhat ſingular hath obtained in the ſtructure of Language. For, in correſpondence to that diſtinction of male and female ſex which runs through all the claſſes of animals, men have, in moſt Languages, ranked a great number of inanimate objects alſo, under the like diſtinctions of maſculine and feminine. Thus, we find it both in the Greek and Latin Tongues: *Gladius*, a ſword, for inſtance, is maſculine; *ſagitta*, an arrow, is feminine; and this aſſignation of ſex to inanimate objects, this diſtinction of them into maſculine and feminine, appears often to be entirely capricious; derived from no other principle

LECT. VIII. than the caſual ſtructure of the Language, which refers, to a certain gender, words of a certain termination. In the Greek and Latin, however, all inanimate objects are not diſtributed into maſculine and feminine; but many of them are alſo claſſed, where all of them ought to have been, under the neuter gender; as, *templum*, a church; *ſedile*, a ſeat.

But the genius of the French and Italian Tongues differs, in this reſpect, from the Greek and Latin. In the French and Italian, from whatever cauſe it has happened, ſo it is, that the neuter gender is wholly unknown, and that all their names of inanimate objects are put upon the ſame footing with living creatures; and diſtributed, without exception, into maſculine and feminine. The French have two articles, the maſculine *le*, and the feminine *la*; and one or other of theſe is prefixed to all ſubſtantive nouns in the Language, to denote their gender. The Italians make the ſame univerſal uſe of their article *il* and *lo*, for the maſculine; and *la* for the feminine.

In the Engliſh Language it is remarkable that there obtains a peculiarity quite oppoſite. In the French and Italian there is no neuter gender. In the Engliſh, when we uſe common diſcourſe, all ſubſtantive nouns, that are not names of living creatures, are neuter without exception. *He*, *ſhe*, and *it*, are the marks of the three genders; and we

we always uſe *it*, in ſpeaking of any object where there is no ſex, or where the ſex is not known. The Engliſh is, perhaps, the only Language in the known world (except the Chineſe, which is ſaid to agree with it in this particular) where the diſtinction of gender is properly and philoſophically applied in the uſe of words, and confined, as it ought to be, to mark the real diſtinctions of male and female. LECT. VIII.

HENCE ariſes a very great and ſignal advantage of the Engliſh Tongue, which it is of conſequence to remark *. Though in common diſcourſe, as I have already obſerved, we employ only the proper and literal diſtinction of ſexes; yet the genius of the Language permits us, whenever it will add beauty to our diſcourſe, to make the names of inanimate objects maſculine and feminine in a metaphorical ſenſe; and when we do ſo, we are underſtood to quit the literal ſtyle, and to uſe one of the figures of diſcourſe.

FOR inſtance; if I am ſpeaking of virtue, in the courſe of ordinary converſation, or of ſtrict reaſoning, I refer the word to no ſex or gender; I ſay, "Virtue is its own reward;" or, "it is the "law of our nature." But if I chuſe to riſe into

* The following obſervations on the metaphorical uſe of genders in the Engliſh Language, are taken from Mr. Harris's Hermes.

a higher

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a higher tone; if I ſeek to embelliſh and animate my diſcourſe, I give a ſex to virtue; I ſay, "She "deſcends from Heaven;" "ſhe alone confers "true honour upon man;" "her gifts are the only "durable rewards." By this means, we have it in our power to vary our ſtyle at pleaſure. By making a very ſlight alteration, we can perſonify any object that we chuſe to introduce with dignity; and by this change of manner, we give warning, that we are paſſing from the ſtrict and logical to the ornamented and rhetorical ſtyle.

THIS is an advantage which not only every poet, but every good writer and ſpeaker in proſe, is, on many occaſions, glad to lay hold of, and improve; and it is an advantage peculiar to our Tongue; no other Language poſſeſſes it. For, in other Languages, every word has one fixed gender, maſculine, feminine, or neuter, which can, upon no occaſion, be changed; ἀρετὴ, for inſtance, in Greek, *virtus* in Latin; and *la vertu* in French; are uniformly feminine. *She* muſt always be the pronoun anſwering to the word, whether you be writing in poetry or in proſe, whether you be uſing the ſtyle of reaſoning, or that of declamation: whereas, in Engliſh, we can either expreſs ourſelves with the philoſophical accuracy of giving no gender to things inanimate; or, by giving them gender, and transforming them into perſons, we adapt them to the ſtyle of poetry, and, when it is proper, we enliven proſe.

IT deſerves to be further remarked on this ſubject, that, when we employ that liberty which our Language allows, of aſcribing ſex to any inanimate object, we have not, however, the liberty of making it of what gender we pleaſe, maſculine or feminine; but are in general, ſubjected to ſome rule of gender which the currency of Language has fixed to that object. The foundation of that rule is imagined, by Mr. Harris, in his "Philoſophical Enquiry into the Principles of Grammar," to be laid in a certain diſtant reſemblance or analogy, to the natural diſtinction of the two ſexes.

THUS, according to him, we commonly give the maſculine gender to thoſe ſubſtantive nouns uſed figuratively, which are conſpicuous for the attributes of imparting, or communicating; which are by nature ſtrong and efficacious, either to good or evil; or which have a claim to ſome eminence, whether laudable or not. Thoſe, again, he imagines to be generally made feminine, which are conſpicuous for the attributes of containing, and of bringing forth; which have more of the paſſive in their nature than of the active; which are peculiarly beautiful or amiable; or which have reſpect to ſuch exceſſes as are rather feminine than maſculine. Upon theſe principles he takes notice, that the ſun is always put in the maſculine gender with us; the moon in the feminine, as being the receptacle of the ſun's light. The earth is, univerſally, feminine.

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feminine. A ſhip, a country, a city, are likewiſe made feminine, as receivers or containers. God, in all Languages, is maſculine. Time, we make maſculine, on account of its mighty efficacy; virtue, feminine, from its beauty, and its being the object of love. Fortune is always feminine. Mr. Harris imagines, that the reaſons which determine the gender of ſuch capital words as theſe, hold in moſt other Languages, as well as the Engliſh. This, however, appears doubtful. A variety of circumſtances, which ſeemed caſual to us, becauſe we cannot reduce them to principles, muſt, unqueſtionably, have influenced the original formation of Languages; and in no article whatever does Language appear to have been more capricious, and to have proceeded leſs according to fixed rule, than in the impoſition of gender upon things inanimate; eſpecially among ſuch nations as have applied the diſtinction of maſculine and feminine to all ſubſtantive nouns.

HAVING diſcuſſed gender, I proceed, next, to another remarkable peculiarity of ſubſtantive nouns, which, in the ſtyle of grammar, is called their declenſion by caſes. Let us, firſt, conſider what caſes ſignify. In order to underſtand this, it is neceſſary to obſerve, that, after men had given names to external objects, had particulariſed them by means of the article, and diſtinguiſhed them by number and gender, ſtill their Language remained extremely imperfect, till they had derived ſome method

method of expreſſing the relations which thoſe objects bore, one towards another. They would find it of little uſe to have a name for man, lion, tree, river, without being able, at the ſame time, to ſignify how theſe ſtood with reſpect to each other; whether, as approaching to, receding from, joined with, and the like. Indeed, the relations which objects bear to one another are immenſely numerous; and therefore, to deviſe names for them all, muſt have been among the laſt and moſt difficult refinements of Language. But, in its moſt early periods, it was abſolutely neceſſary to expreſs, in ſome way or other, ſuch relations as were moſt important, and as occurred moſt frequently in common Speech. Hence the genitive, dative, and ablative caſes of nouns, which expreſs the noun itſelf together with thoſe relations, *of*, *to*, *from*, *with*, and *by*; the relations which we have the moſt frequent occaſion to mention. The proper idea, then, of caſes in declenſion, is no other than an expreſſion of the ſtate, or relation, which one object bears to another, denoted by ſome variation made upon the name of that object; moſt commonly in the final letters, and, by ſome Languages, in the initial.

ALL Languages, however, do not agree in this mode of expreſſion. The Greek, Latin, and ſeveral other Languages, uſe declenſion. The Engliſh, French, and Italian, do not; or, at moſt, uſe it very imperfectly. In place of the variations of

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of caſes, the modern Tongues expreſs the relations of objects, by means of the words called Prepoſitions, which denote thoſe relations, prefixed to the name of the object. Engliſh nouns have no caſe whatever, except a ſort of genitive, commonly formed by the addition of the letter *s* to the noun; as when we ſay "Dryden's Poems," meaning the Poems of Dryden. Our perſonal pronouns have alſo a caſe, which anſwers to the accuſative of the Latin, *I, me, — he, him, — who, whom.* There is nothing, then, or at leaſt very little, in the Grammar of our Language, which correſponds to declenſion in the antient Languages.

Two queſtions, reſpecting this ſubject, may be put. Firſt, Which of theſe methods of expreſſing relations, whether that by declenſion, or that by prepoſitions, was the moſt antient uſage in Language? And next, Which of them has the beſt effect? Both methods, it is plain, are the ſame as to the ſenſe, and differ only in form. For the ſignificancy of the Roman Language would not have been altered, though the nouns, like ours, had been without caſes, provided they had employed prepoſitions; and though, to expreſs a diſciple of Plato, they had ſaid, "Diſcipulus de Plato," like the modern Italians, in place of "Diſcipulus "Platonis."

Now, with reſpect to the antiquity of caſes, although they may, on firſt view, ſeem to conſtitute

a more artificial method than the other, of denoting relations, yet there are ſtrong reaſons for thinking that this was the earlieſt method practiſed by men. We find, in fact, that declenſions and caſes are uſed in moſt of what are called the Mother Tongues, or Original Languages, as well as in the Greek and Latin. And a very natural and ſatisfying account can be given why this uſage ſhould have early obtained. Relations are the moſt abſtract and metaphyſical ideas of any which men have occaſion to form, when they are conſidered by themſelves, and ſeparated from the related object. It would puzzle any man, as has been well obſerved by an Author on this ſubject, to give a diſtinct account of what is meant by ſuch a word as *of*, or *from*, when it ſtands by itſelf, and to explain all that may be included under it. The firſt rude Inventors of Language, therefore, would not, for a long while, arrive at ſuch general terms. In place of conſidering any relation in the abſtract, and deviſing a name for it, they would much more eaſily conceive it in conjunction with a particular object; and they would expreſs their conceptions of it, by varying the name of that object through all the different caſes; *hominis*, of a man; *homini*, to a man; *homine*, with a man, &c.

But, though this method of declenſion was, probably, the only method which men employed at firſt for denoting relations, yet, in progreſs of time, many other relations being obſerved, beſides thoſe

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thoſe which are ſignified by the caſes of nouns, and men alſo becoming more capable of general and metaphyſical ideas, ſeparate names were gradually invented for all the relations which occurred, forming that Part of Speech which we now call Prepoſitions. Prepoſitions being once introduced, they were found to be capable of ſupplying the place of caſes, by being prefixed to the nominative of the noun. Hence it came to paſs, that, as nations were intermixed by migrations and conqueſts, and were obliged to learn, and adopt the Languages of one another, prepoſitions ſupplanted the uſe of caſes and declenſions. When the Italian Tongue, for inſtance, ſprung out of the Roman, it was found more eaſy and ſimple, by the Gothic nations, to accommodate a few prepoſitions to the nominative of every noun, and to ſay, *di Roma*, *al Roma*, *di Carthago*, *al Carthago*, than to remember all the variety of terminations, *Romæ*, *Romam*, *Carthaginis*, *Carthaginem*, which the uſe of declenſions required in the antient nouns. By this progreſs we can give a natural account how nouns, in our modern Tongues, come to be ſo void of declenſion: a progreſs which is fully illuſtrated in Dr. Adam Smith's ingenious Diſſertation on the Formation of Languages.

WITH regard to the other queſtion on this ſubject, Which of theſe two methods is of the greater utility and beauty? we ſhall find advantages and diſadvantages to be balanced on both ſides. There

is no doubt, that, by abolishing cases, we have rendered the structure of modern Languages more simple. We have disembarrassed it of all the intricacy which arose from the different forms of declension, of which the Romans had no fewer than five; and from all the irregularities in these several declensions. We have thereby rendered our Languages more easy to be acquired, and less subject to the perplexity of rules. But, though the simplicity and ease of Language be great and estimable advantages, yet there are also such disadvantages attending the modern method, as leave the balance, on the whole, doubtful, or rather incline it to the side of antiquity. LECT. VIII.

For, in the first place, by our constant use of prepositions for expressing the relations of things, we have filled Language with a multitude of those little words, which are eternally occurring in every sentence, and may be thought thereby to have encumbered Speech; by an addition of terms; and, by rendering it more prolix, to have enervated its force. In the second place, we have certainly rendered the sound of Language less agreeable to the ear, by depriving it of that variety and sweetness which arose from the length of words, and the change of terminations, occasioned by the cases in the Greek and Latin. But, in the third place, the most material disadvantage is, that, by this abolition of cases, and by a similar alteration, of which I am to speak in the next Lecture, in the

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conjugation of verbs, we have deprived ourſelves of that liberty of tranſpoſition in the arrangement of words, which the antient Languages enjoyed.

In the antient Tongues, as I formerly obſerved, the different terminations, produced by declenſion and conjugation, pointed out the reference of the ſeveral words of a ſentence to one another, without the aid of juxtapoſition; ſuffered them to be placed, without ambiguity, in whatever order was moſt ſuited to give force to the meaning, or harmony to the ſound. But now, having none of thoſe marks of relation incorporated with the words themſelves, we have no other way left us of ſhewing what words in a ſentence are moſt cloſely connected in meaning, than that of placing them cloſe by one another in the period. The meaning of the ſentence is brought out in ſeparate members and portions; it is broken down and divided. Whereas the ſtructure of the Greek and Roman ſentences, by the government of their nouns and verbs, preſented the meaning ſo interwoven and compounded in all its parts, as to make us perceive it in one united view. The cloſing words of the period aſcertained the relation of each member to another; and all that ought to be connected in our idea, appeared connected in the expreſſion. Hence, more brevity, more vivacity, more force. That luggage of particles (as an ingenious Author happily expreſſes it), which we are

are obliged always to carry along with us, both clogs ſtyle, and enfeebles ſentiment.* LECT. VIII.

PRONOUNS are the claſs of words moſt nearly related to ſubſtantive nouns; being, as the name imports, repreſentatives, or ſubſtitutes, of nouns. *I*, *thou*, *he*, *ſhe*, and *it*, are no other than an abridged way of naming the perſons, or objects, with which we have immediate intercourſe, or to which we are obliged frequently to refer in diſcourſe. Accordingly, they are ſubject to the ſame modifica-

* "The various terminations of the ſame word, whether verb or noun, are always conceived to be more intimately connected with the term which they ſerve to lengthen, than the additional, detached, and in themſelves inſignificant particles, which we are obliged to employ as connectives to our ſignificant words. Our method gives almoſt the ſame expoſure to the one as to the other, making the ſignificant parts, and the inſignificant, equally conſpicuous; theirs much oftener ſinks, as it were, the former into the latter, at once preſerving their uſe, and hiding their weakneſs. Our modern Languages may, in this reſpect, be compared to the art of the carpenter in its rudeſt ſtate; when the union of the materials employed by the artiſan, could be effected only by the help of thoſe external and coarſe implements, pins, nails, and cramps. The antient Languages reſemble the ſame art in its moſt improved ſtate, after the invention of dovetail joints, grooves, and mortices; when thus all the principal junctions are effected, by forming, properly, the extremities, or terminations of the pieces to be joined. For, by means of theſe, the union of the parts is rendered cloſer; while that by which that union is produced is ſcarcely perceivable." The Philoſophy of Rhetoric, by Dr. Campbell, vol. ii. p. 412.

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tions with ſubſtantive nouns, of number, gender, and caſe. Only, with reſpect to gender, we may obſerve, that the pronouns of the firſt and ſecond perſon, as they are called, *I* and *thou*, do not appear to have had the diſtinctions of gender given them in any Language; for this plain reaſon, that as they always refer to perſons who are preſent to each other when they ſpeak, their ſex muſt appear, and therefore needs not be marked by a maſculine or feminine pronoun. But, as the third perſon may be abſent, or unknown, the diſtinction of gender there becomes neceſſary; and accordingly, in Engliſh, it hath all the three genders belonging to it; *he*, *ſhe*, *it*. As to caſes; even thoſe Languages which have dropped them in ſubſtantive nouns, ſometimes retain more of them in pronouns, for the ſake of the greater readineſs in expreſſing relations; as pronouns are words of ſuch frequent occurrence in diſcourſe. In Engliſh, moſt of our grammarians hold the perſonal pronouns to have two caſes, beſides the nominative; a genitive, and an accuſative. — *I*, *mine*, *me*; — *thou*, *thine*, *thee*; — *he*, *his*, *him*; — *who*, *whoſe*, *whom*.

In the firſt ſtage of Speech, it is probable that the places of thoſe pronouns were ſupplied by pointing to the object when preſent, and naming it when abſent. For one can hardly think that pronouns were of early invention; as they are words of ſuch a particular and artificial nature. *I*, *thou*, *he*,

be, *it*, it is to be obſerved, are not names peculiar to any ſingle object, but ſo very general, that they may be applied to all perſons, or objects, whatever, in certain circumſtances. *It* is the moſt general term that can poſſibly be conceived, as it may ſtand for any one thing in the univerſe of which we ſpeak. At the ſame time, theſe pronouns have this quality, that, in the circumſtances in which they are applied, they never denote more than one preciſe individual; which they aſcertain, and ſpecify, much in the ſame manner as is done by the article. So that pronouns are, at once, the moſt general, and the moſt particular words in Language. They are commonly the moſt irregular and troubleſome words to the learner, in the Grammar of all Tongues; as being the words moſt in common uſe, and ſubjected thereby to the greateſt varieties. LECT. VIII.

ADJECTIVES, or terms of quality, ſuch as *great*, *little*, *black*, *white*, *yours*, *ours*, are the plaineſt and ſimpleſt of all that claſs of words which are termed attributive. They are found in all Languages; and, in all Languages, muſt have been very early invented; as objects could not be diſtinguiſhed from one another, nor any intercourſe be carried on concerning them, till once names were given to their different qualities.

I HAVE nothing to obſerve in relation to them, except that ſingularity which attends them in the

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Greek and Latin, of having the ſame form given them with ſubſtantive nouns; being declined, like them, by caſes, and ſubjected to the like diſtinctions of number and gender. Hence, it has happened, that grammarians have made them belong to the ſame part of Speech, and divided the noun into ſubſtantive and adjective; an arrangement founded more on attention to the external form of words, than to their nature and force. For adjectives, or terms of quality, have not, by their nature, the leaſt reſemblance to ſubſtantive nouns, as they never expreſs any thing which can poſſibly ſubſiſt by itſelf; which is the very eſſence of the ſubſtantive noun. They are, indeed, more a-kin to verbs, which, like them, expreſs the attribute of ſome ſubſtance.

It may, at firſt view, appear ſomewhat odd and fantaſtic, that adjectives ſhould, in the antient Languages, have aſſumed ſo much the form of ſubſtantives; ſince neither number, nor gender, nor caſes, nor relations, have any thing to do, in a proper ſenſe, with mere qualities, ſuch as, *good* or *great*, *ſoft* or *hard*. And yet *bonus*, and *magnus*, and *tener*, have their ſingular and plural, their maſculine and feminine, their genitives and datives, like any of the names of ſubſtances, or perſons. But this can be accounted for, from the genius of thoſe Tongues. They avoided, as much as poſſible, conſidering qualities ſeparately, or in the abſtract. They made them a part, or appendage of the ſubſtance

ſtance which they ſerved to diſtinguiſh; they made the adjective depend on its ſubſtantive, and reſemble it in termination, in number, and gender, in order that the two might coaleſce the more intimately, and be joined in the form of expreſſion, as they were in the nature of things. The liberty of tranſpoſition, too, which thoſe Languages indulged, required ſuch a method as this to be followed. For, allowing the related words of a ſentence to be placed at a diſtance from each other, it required the relation of adjectives to their proper ſubſtantives to be pointed out, by ſuch ſimilar circumſtances of form and termination, as, according to the grammatical ſtyle, ſhould ſhew their concordance. When I ſay, in Engliſh, the "Beautiful wife of a brave man," the juxtapoſition of the words prevents all ambiguity. But when I ſay, in Latin, "Formoſa fortis viri uxor;" it is only the agreement, in gender, number, and caſe, of the adjective, "*formoſa*," which is the firſt word of the ſentence, with the ſubſtantive "*uxor*," which is the laſt word, that declares the meaning.

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OF the whole claſs of words that are called attributive, indeed, of all the parts of Speech, the moſt complex, by far, is the verb. It is chiefly in this part of Speech, that the ſubtile and profound metaphyſic of Language appears; and, therefore, in examining the nature and different variations of the verb, there might be room for ample diſcuſſion. But as I am ſenſible that ſuch grammatical diſcuſſions, when they are purſued far, become intricate and obſcure, I ſhall avoid dwelling any longer on this ſubject than ſeems abſolutely neceſſary.

THE verb is ſo far of the ſame nature with the adjective, that it expreſſes, like it, an attribute, or property, of ſome perſon or thing. But it does more than this. For, in all verbs, in every Language, there are no leſs than three things implied at once; the attribute of ſome ſubſtantive, an affirmation concerning that attribute, and time. Thus,

Thus, when I ſay, "the ſun ſhineth;" ſhining is the attribute aſcribed to the ſun; the preſent time is marked; and an affirmation is included, that this property of ſhining belongs, at that time, to the ſun. The participle "ſhining," is merely an adjective, which denotes an attribute, or property, and alſo expreſſes time; but carries no affirmation. The infinitive mood, "to ſhine," may be called the name of the verb; it carries neither time nor affirmation, but ſimply expreſſes that attribute, action, or ſtate of things, which is to be the ſubject of the other moods and tenſes. Hence, the infinitive often carries the reſemblance of a ſubſtantive noun; and, both in Engliſh and Latin, is ſometimes conſtructed as ſuch. As, "ſcire tuum nihil eſt," "Dulce et decorum eſt "pro patria mori." And, in Engliſh, in the ſame manner; "To write well is difficult; to "ſpeak eloquently is ſtill more difficult." But as, through all the other tenſes and moods, the affirmation runs, and is eſſential to them; "the "ſun ſhineth, was ſhining, ſhone, will ſhine, "would have ſhone," &c. the affirmation ſeems to be that which chiefly diſtinguiſhes the verb from the other parts of Speech, and gives it its moſt conſpicuous power. Hence, there can be no ſentence, or complete propoſition, without a verb either expreſſed or implied. For, whenever we ſpeak, we always mean to aſſert, that ſomething is, or is not; and the word which carries this aſſertion, or affirmation, is a verb. From this

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VERBS, therefore, from their importance and neceſſity in Speech, muſt have been coëval with men's firſt attempts towards the formation of Language: Though, indeed, it muſt have been the work of long time, to rear them up to that accurate and complex ſtructure which they now poſſeſs. It ſeems very probable, as Dr. Smith has ſuggeſted, that the radical verb, or the firſt form of it, in moſt Languages, would be, what we now call, the Impersonal verb. "It rains; it thunders; it is light; "it is agreeable;" and the like; as this is the very ſimpleſt form of the verb, and merely affirms the exiſtence of an event, or of a ſtate of things. By degrees, after pronouns were invented, ſuch verbs became perſonal, and were branched out into all the variety of tenſes and moods.

THE tenſes of the verb are contrived to imply the ſeveral diſtinctions of time. Of theſe I muſt take ſome notice, in order to ſhew the admirable accuracy with which Language is conſtructed. We think commonly of no more than the three great diviſions of time, into the paſt, the preſent, and the future: and we might imagine, that if verbs had been ſo contrived, as ſimply to expreſs theſe, no more was needful. But Language proceeds with much greater ſubtilty. It ſplits time into

into its ſeveral moments. It conſiders time as never ſtanding ſtill, but always flowing; things paſt, as more or leſs perfectly completed; and things future, as more or leſs remote, by different gradations. Hence, the great variety of tenſes in moſt Tongues. LECT. IX.

THE preſent may, indeed, be always conſidered as one indiviſible point, ſuſceptible of no variety. "I write, or I am writing; *ſcribo.*" But it is not ſo with the paſt. There is no language ſo poor, but it hath two or three tenſes to expreſs the varieties of it. Ours hath no fewer than four. 1. A paſt action may be conſidered as left unfiniſhed; which makes the imperfect tenſe, "I was writing; *ſcribebam.*" 2. As juſt now finiſhed. This makes the proper perfect tenſe, which, in Engliſh, is always expreſſed by the help of the auxiliary verb, "I have written." 3. It may be conſidered as finiſhed ſome time ago; the particular time left indefinite. "I wrote; *ſcripſi*;" which may either ſignify, "I wrote yeſterday, or I wrote a twelve-"month ago." This is what grammarians call an aöriſt, or indefinite paſt. 4. It may be conſidered as finiſhed before ſomething elſe, which is alſo paſt. This is the pluſquamperfect. "I had writ-"ten, *ſcripſeram.* I had written before I received "his letter."

HERE we obſerve, with ſome pleaſure, that we have an advantage over the Latins, who have only three

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THE chief varieties in the future time are two; a ſimple or indefinite future: "I ſhall write; "*ſcribam*;" And a future, relating to ſomething elſe, which is alſo future. "I ſhall have written; "*ſcripſero*," I ſhall have written before he arrives*.

BESIDES tenſes, or the power of expreſſing time, verbs admit the diſtinction of Voices, as they are called, the active and the paſſive: according as the affirmation reſpects ſomething that is done, or ſomething that is ſuffered; "I love, or I am "loved." They admit alſo the diſtinction of

* On the tenſes of verbs, Mr. Harris's Hermes may be conſulted, by ſuch as deſire to ſee them ſcrutinized with metaphyſical accuracy; and alſo, the Treatiſe on the Origin and Progreſs of Language, Vol. ii. p. 125.

moods,

moods, which are deſigned to expreſs the affirmation, whether active or paſſive, under different forms. The indicative mood, for inſtance, ſimply declares a propoſition, "I write; I have written;" the imperative requires, commands, threatens, "write thou; let him write." The ſubjunctive expreſſes the propoſition under the form of a condition, or in ſubordination to ſome other thing, to which a reference is made, "I might write, I "could write, I ſhould write, if the caſe were ſo "and ſo." This manner of expreſſing an affirmation, under ſo many different forms, together alſo with the diſtinction of the three perſons, *I*, *thou*, and *he*, conſtitutes what is called the conjugation of verbs, which makes ſo great a part of the Grammar of all Languages. LECT. IX.

It now clearly appears, as I before obſerved, that, of all the parts of Speech, verbs are, by far, the moſt artificial and complex. Conſider only, how many things are denoted by this ſingle Latin word, "*amaviſſem*, I would have loved." Firſt, The perſon who ſpeaks, "I." Secondly, An attribute, or action of that perſon, "loving." Thirdly, An affirmation concerning that action. Fourthly, The paſt time denoted in that affirmation, "have loved:" and, Fifthly, A condition on which the action is ſuſpended, "would have "loved." It appears curious and remarkable, that words of this complex import, and with more or leſs of this artificial ſtructure, are to be found,

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found, as far as we know, in all Languages of the world.

INDEED, the form of conjugation, or the manner of expreſſing all theſe varieties in the verb, differs greatly in different Tongues. Conjugation is eſteemed moſt perfect in thoſe Languages which, by varying either the termination of the initial ſyllable of the verb, expreſs the greateſt number of important circumſtances, without the help of auxiliary words. In the Oriental Tongues, the verbs are ſaid to have few tenſes, or expreſſions of time; but then their moods are ſo contrived, as to expreſs a great variety of circumſtances and relations. In the Hebrew, for inſtance, they ſay, in one word, without the help of any auxiliary, not only, "I have taught," but, "I have taught "exactly, or often; I have been commanded to "teach; I have taught myſelf." The Greek, which is the moſt perfect of all the known Tongues, is very regular and complete in all the tenſes and moods. The Latin is formed on the ſame model, but more imperfect, eſpecially in the paſſive voice, which forms moſt of the tenſes by the help of the auxiliary "*ſum.*"

IN all the modern European Tongues, conjugation is very defective. They admit few varieties in the termination of the verb itſelf; but have almoſt conſtant recourſe to their auxiliary verbs, throughout all the moods and tenſes, both active and

and paſſive. Language has undergone a change in conjugation, perfectly ſimilar to that which I ſhewed in the laſt Lecture, it underwent with reſpect to declenſion. As prepoſitions, prefixed to the noun, ſuperſeded the uſe of caſes; ſo the two great auxiliary verbs, to *have*, and to *be*, with thoſe other auxiliaries, which we uſe in Engliſh, *do*, *ſhall*, *will*, *may*, and *can*, prefixed to the participle, ſuperſede, in a great meaſure, the different terminations of moods and tenſes, which formed the antient conjugations. LECT. IX.

THE alteration, in both caſes, was owing to the ſame cauſe, and will be eaſily underſtood, from reflecting on what was formerly obſerved. The auxiliary verbs are like prepoſitions, words of a very general and abſtract nature. They imply the different modifications of ſimple exiſtence, conſidered alone, and without reference to any particular thing. In the early ſtate of Speech, the import of them would be incorporated with every particular verb in its tenſes and moods, long before words were invented for denoting ſuch abſtract conceptions of exiſtence, alone, and by themſelves. But after thoſe auxiliary verbs came, in the progreſs of Language, to be invented and known, and to have tenſes and moods given to them like other verbs; it was found, that as they carried in their nature the force of that affirmation which diſtinguiſhes the verb, they might, by being joined with the participle which gives the meaning of the

LECT. IX. verb, ſupply the place of moſt of the moods and tenſes. Hence, as the modern Tongues began to riſe out of the ruins of the antient, this method eſtabliſhed itſelf in the new formation of Speech. Such words, for inſtance, as, *am*, *was*, *have*, *ſhall*, being once familiar, it appeared more eaſy to apply theſe to any verb whatever; as, *I am loved*; *I was loved*; *I have loved*; than to remember that variety of terminations which were requiſite in conjugating the antient verbs, *amor*, *amabar*, *amavi*, &c. Two or three varieties only, in the termination of the verb, were retained, as, *love*, *loved*, *loving*; and all the reſt were dropt. The conſequence, however, of this practice was the ſame as that of aboliſhing declenſions. It rendered Language more ſimple and eaſy in its ſtructure; but withal more prolix, and leſs graceful. This finiſhes all that ſeemed moſt neceſſary to be obſerved with reſpect to verbs.

THE remaining parts of ſpeech, which are called the indeclinable parts, or that admit of no variations, will not detain us long.

ADVERBS are the firſt that occur. Theſe form a very numerous claſs of words in every Language, reducible, in general, to the head of Attributives; as they ſerve to modify, or to denote ſome circumſtance of an action, or of a quality, relative to its time, place, order, degree, and the other properties of it, which we have occaſion to ſpecify.

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They are, for the moſt part, no more than an abridged mode of Speech, expreſſing, by one word, what might, by a circumlocution, be reſolved into two or more words belonging to the other parts of Speech. "Exceedingly," for inſtance, is the ſame as, "in a high degree:" "bravely," the ſame as "with bravery or valour;" "here," the ſame as, "in this place;" "often, and ſeldom," the ſame as, "for many, and for few times:" and ſo of the reſt. Hence, adverbs may be conceived as of leſs neceſſity, and of later introduction into the ſyſtem of Speech, than many other claſſes of words; and, accordingly, the great body of them are derived from other words formerly eſtabliſhed in the Language. LECT. IX.

PREPOSITIONS and conjunctions are words more eſſential to diſcourſe than the greateſt part of adverbs. They form that claſs of words, called Connectives, without which there could be no Language; ſerving to expreſs the relations which things bear to one another, their mutual influence, dependencies, and coherence; thereby joining words together into intelligible and ſignificant propoſitions. Conjunctions are generally employed for connecting ſentences, or members of ſentences; as, *and*, *becauſe*, *although*, and the like. Prepoſitions are employed for connecting words, by ſhewing the relation which one ſubſtantive noun bears to another; as, *of*, *from*, *to*, *above*, *below*, &c. Of the force of theſe I had occaſion to ſpeak before,

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before, when treating of the cafes and declenfions of fubftantive nouns.

It is abundantly evident, that all thefe connective particles muft be of the greateft ufe in Speech; feeing they point out the relations and tranfitions by which the mind paffes from one idea to another. They are the foundation of all reafoning, which is no other thing than the connection of thoughts. And, therefore, though among barbarous nations, and in the rude uncivilized ages of the world, the ftock of thefe words might be fmall, it muft always have increafed, as mankind advanced in the arts of reafoning and reflection. The more that any nation is improved by fcience, and the more perfect their language becomes, we may naturally expect, that it will abound more with connective particles; expreffing relations of things, and tranfitions of thought, which had efcaped a groffer view. Accordingly, no Tongue is fo full of them as the Greek, in confequence of the acute and fubtile genius of that refined people. In every Language, much of the beauty and ftrength of it depends on the proper ufe of conjunctions, prepofitions, and thofe relative pronouns, which alfo ferve the fame purpofe of connecting the different parts of difcourfe. It is the right, or wrong management of thefe, which chiefly makes difcourfe appear firm and compacted, or disjointed and loofe; which carries it on in its progrefs with a fmooth and even pace, or renders its march irregular and defultory.

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I SHALL dwell no longer on the general conſtruction of Language. Allow me, only, before I diſmiſs the ſubject, to obſerve, that dry and intricate as it may ſeem to ſome, it is, however, of great importance, and very nearly connected with the philoſophy of the human mind. For, if Speech be the vehicle, or interpreter of the conceptions of our minds, an examination of its Structure and Progreſs cannot but unfold many things concerning the nature and progreſs of our conceptions themſelves, and the operations of our faculties; a ſubject that is always inſtructive to man. "Nequis," ſays Quinctilian, an author of excellent judgment, "nequis tanquam parva fa-
"ſtidiat grammatices elementa. Non quia magnæ
"ſit operæ conſonantes a vocalibus diſcernere,
"eaſque in ſemivocalium numerum, mutarumque
"partiri, ſed quia interiora velut ſacri hujus ade-
"ytibus, apparebit multa rerum ſubtilitas, quæ
"non modo acuere ingenia puerilia, ſed exercere
"altiſſimam quoque eruditionem ac ſcientiam
"poſſit *." i. 4.

* "Let no man deſpiſe, as inconſiderable, the elements of
"grammar, becauſe it may ſeem to him a matter of ſmall con-
"ſequence, to ſhew the diſtinction between vowels and con-
"ſonants, and to divide the latter into liquids and mutes. But
"they who penetrate into the innermoſt parts of this temple of
"ſcience, will there diſcover ſuch refinement and ſubtilty of
"matter, as is not only proper to ſharpen the underſtandings of
"young men, but ſufficient to give exerciſe for the moſt pro-
"found knowledge and erudition."

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LET us now come nearer to our own Language. In this, and the preceding Lecture, ſome obſervations have already been made on its Structure. But it is proper that we ſhould be a little more particular in the examination of it.

THE Language which is, at preſent, ſpoken throughout Great Britain, is neither the antient primitive Speech of the iſland, nor derived from it; but is altogether of foreign origin. The Language of the firſt inhabitants of our iſland, beyond doubt, was the Celtic, or Gaëlic, common to them with Gaul; from which country, it appears, by many circumſtances, that Great Britain was peopled. This Celtic Tongue, which is ſaid to be very expreſſive, and copious, and is, probably, one of the moſt antient Languages in the world, obtained once in moſt of the weſtern regions of Europe. It was the Language of Gaul, of Great Britain, of Ireland, and, very probably, of Spain alſo; till, in the courſe of thoſe revolutions, which by means of the conqueſts, firſt, of the Romans, and afterwards, of the northern nations, changed the government, ſpeech, and, in a manner, the whole face of Europe, this Tongue was gradually obliterated; and now ſubſiſts only in the mountains of Wales, in the Highlands of Scotland, and among the wild Iriſh. For the Iriſh, the Welch, and the Erſe, are no other than different dialects of the ſame Tongue, the antient Celtic.

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THIS, then, was the Language of the primitive Britons, the firſt inhabitants that we know of, in our iſland; and continued ſo till the arrival of the Saxons in England, in the year of our lord 450; who, having conquered the Britons, did not intermix with them, but expelled them from their habitations, and drove them, together with their Language, into the mountains of Wales. The Saxons were one of thoſe northern nations that over-ran Europe; and their Tongue, a dialect of the Gothic or Teutonic, altogether diſtinct from the Celtic, laid the foundation of the preſent Engliſh Tongue. With ſome intermixture of Daniſh, a Language, probably, from the ſame root with the Saxon, it continued to be ſpoken throughout the ſouthern part of the iſland, till the time of William the Conqueror. He introduced his Norman or French as the Language of the court, which made a conſiderable change in the Speech of the nation; and the Engliſh which was ſpoken afterwards, and continues to be ſpoken now, is a mixture of the antient Saxon, and this Norman French, together with ſuch new and foreign words as commerce and learning have, in progreſs of time, gradually introduced.

THE hiſtory of the Engliſh Language can, in this manner, be clearly traced. The Language ſpoken in the Low Countries of Scotland, is now, and has been for many centuries, no other than a dialect of the Engliſh. How, indeed, or by what

LECT. IX. ſteps, the antient Celtic Tongue came to be baniſhed from the Low Country in Scotland, and to make its retreat into the Highlands and Iſlands, cannot be ſo well pointed out, as how the like revolution was brought about in England. Whether the ſouthermoſt part of Scotland was once ſubject to the Saxons, and formed a part of the kingdom of Northumberland; or, whether the great number of Engliſh exiles that retreated into Scotland, upon the Norman conqueſt, and upon other occaſions, introduced into that country their own Language, which afterwards, by the mutual intercourſe of the two nations, prevailed over the Celtic, are uncertain and conteſted points, the diſcuſſion of which would lead us too far from our ſubject.

FROM what has been ſaid, it appears, that the Teutonic dialect is the baſis of our preſent Speech. It has been imported among us in three different forms, the Saxon, the Daniſh, and the Norman; all which have mingled together in our Language. A very great number of our words, too, are plainly derived from the Latin. Theſe we had not directly from the Latin, but moſt of them, it is probable, entered into our Tongue, through the channel of that Norman French, which William the Conqueror introduced. For, as the Romans had long been in full poſſeſſion of Gaul, the Language ſpoken in that country, when it was invaded by the Franks and Normans, was a ſort of corrupted

rupted Latin, mingled with Celtic, to which was given the name of Romanſhe: and as the Franks and Normans did not, like the Saxons in England, expel the inhabitants, but, after their victories, mingled with them; the Language of the country became a compound of the Teutonic dialect imported by theſe conquerors, and of the former corrupted Latin. Hence, the French Language has always continued to have a very conſiderable affinity with the Latin; and hence, a great number of words of Latin origin, which were in uſe among the Normans in France, were introduced into our Tongue at the conqueſt; to which, indeed, many have ſince been added, directly from the Latin, in conſequence of the great diffuſion of Roman literature throughout all Europe. LECT. IX.

From the influx of ſo many ſtreams, from the junction of ſo many diſſimilar parts, it naturally follows, that the Engliſh, like every compounded Language, muſt needs be ſomewhat irregular. We cannot expect from it that correſpondence of parts, that complete analogy in ſtructure, which may be found in thoſe ſimpler Languages, which have been formed in a manner within themſelves, and built on one foundation. Hence, as I before ſhewed, it has but ſmall remains of conjugation or declenſion; and its ſyntax is narrow, as there are few marks in the words themſelves that can ſhew their relation to each other, or, in the grammatical ſtyle, point out either their concordance, or their

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But theſe diſadvantages, if they be ſuch, of a compound Language, are balanced by other advantages that attend it; particularly, by the number and variety of words with which ſuch a Language is likely to be enriched. Few Languages are, in fact, more copious than the Engliſh. In all grave ſubjects eſpecially, hiſtorical, critical, political, and moral, no writer has the leaſt reaſon to complain of the barrenneſs of our Tongue. The ſtudious reflecting genius of the people, has brought together great ſtore of expreſſions, on ſuch ſubjects, from every quarter. We are rich too in the Language of poetry. Our poetical ſtyle differs widely from proſe, not in point of numbers only, but in the very words themſelves; which ſhews what a ſtock and compaſs of words we have it in our power to ſelect and employ, ſuited to thoſe different occaſions. Herein we are infinitely ſuperior to the French, whoſe poetical Language, if it were not diſtinguiſhed by rhyme, would not be known to differ from their ordinary proſe.

It is chiefly, indeed, on grave ſubjects, and with reſpect to the ſtronger emotions of the mind, that our

our Language diſplays its power of expreſſion. We are ſaid to have thirty words, at leaſt, for denoting all the varieties of the paſſion of anger*. But, in deſcribing the more delicate ſentiments and emotions, our Tongue is not ſo fertile. It muſt be confeſſed, that the French Language far ſurpaſſes ours, in expreſſing the nicer ſhades of character; eſpecially thoſe varieties of manner, temper, and behaviour, which are diſplayed in our ſocial intercourſe with one another. Let any one attempt to tranſlate, into Engliſh, only a few pages of one of Marivaux's Novels, and he will ſoon be ſenſible of our deficiency of expreſſions on theſe ſubjects. Indeed, no Language is ſo copious as the French for whatever is delicate, gay, and amuſing. It is, perhaps, the happieſt Language for converſation in the known world; but, on the higher ſubjects of compoſition, the Engliſh may be juſtly eſteemed to excel it conſiderably.

LANGUAGE is generally underſtood to receive its predominant tincture from the national character of the people who ſpeak it. We muſt not, indeed, expect, that it will carry an exact and full impreſ-

* Anger, wrath, paſſion, rage, fury, outrage, fierceneſs, ſharpneſs, animoſity, choler, reſentment, heat, heartburning; to fume, ſtorm, inflame, be incenſed; to vex, kindle, irritate, enrage, exaſperate, provoke, fret: to be ſullen, haſty, hot, rough, ſour, peeviſh, &c.

Preface to Greenwood's Grammar.

ſion

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ſion of their genius and manners; for, among all nations, the original ſtock of words which they received from their anceſtors, remain as the foundation of their Speech throughout many ages, while their manners undergo, perhaps, very great alterations. National character will, however, always have ſome perceptible influence on the turn of Language; and the gaiety and vivacity of the French, and the gravity and thoughtfulneſs of the Engliſh, are ſufficiently impreſſed on their reſpective Tongues.

FROM the genius of our Language, and the character of thoſe who ſpeak it, it may be expected to have ſtrength and energy. It is, indeed, naturally prolix; owing to the great number of particles and auxiliary verbs which we are obliged conſtantly to employ; and this prolixity muſt, in ſome degree, enfeeble it. We ſeldom can expreſs ſo much by one word as was done by the verbs, and by the nouns, in the Greek and Roman Languages. Our ſtyle is leſs compact; our conceptions being ſpread out among more words, and ſplit, as it were, into more parts, make a fainter impreſſion when we utter them. Notwithſtanding this defect, by our abounding in terms for expreſſing all the ſtrong emotions of the mind, and by the liberty which we enjoy, in a greater degree than moſt nations, of compounding words, our Language may be eſteemed to poſſeſs conſiderable force of expreſſion; comparatively, at leaſt, with the

the other modern Tongues, though much below the antient. The ſtyle of Milton alone, both in poetry and proſe, is a ſufficient proof, that the Engliſh Tongue is far from being deſtitute of nerves and energy. LECT. IX.

THE flexibility of a Language, or its power of accommodation to different ſtyles and manners, ſo as to be either grave and ſtrong, or eaſy and flowing, or tender and gentle, or pompous and magnificent, as occaſions require, or as an author's genius prompts, is a quality of great importance in ſpeaking and writing. It ſeems to depend upon three things; the copiouſneſs of a Language; the different arrangements of which its words are ſuſceptible; and the variety and beauty of the ſound of thoſe words, ſo as to correſpond to many different ſubjects. Never did any Tongue poſſeſs this quality ſo eminently as the Greek, which every writer of genius could ſo mould, as to make the ſtyle perfectly expreſſive of his own manner and peculiar turn. It had all the three requiſites, which I have mentioned as neceſſary for this purpoſe. It joined to theſe the graceful variety of its different dialects; and thereby readily aſſumed every ſort of character which an author could wiſh, from the moſt ſimple and moſt familiar, up to the moſt majeſtic. The Latin, though a very beautiful language, is inferior, in this reſpect, to the Greek. It has more of a fixed character of ſtatelineſs and gravity. It is always firm

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firm and maſculine in the tenour of its ſound; and is ſupported by a certain ſenatorial dignity, of which it is difficult for a writer to diveſt it wholly, on any occaſion. Among the modern Tongues, the Italian poſſeſſes a great deal more of this flexibility than the French. By its copiouſneſs, its freedom of arrangement, and the great beauty and harmony of its ſounds, it ſuits itſelf very happily to moſt ſubjects, either in proſe or in poetry; is capable of the auguſt and the ſtrong, as well as the tender; and ſeems to be, on the whole, the moſt perfect of all the modern dialects which have ariſen out of the ruins of the antient. Our own language, though not equal to the Italian in flexibility, yet is not deſtitute of a conſiderable degree of this quality. If any one will conſider the diverſity of ſtyle which appears in ſome of our claſſics, that great difference of manner, for inſtance, which is marked by the ſtyle of Lord Shafteſbury, and that of Dean Swift, he will ſee, in our Tongue, ſuch a circle of expreſſion, ſuch a power of accommodation to the different taſte of writers, as redounds not a little to its honour.

WHAT the Engliſh has been moſt taxed with is its deficiency in harmony of ſound. But though every native is apt to be partial to the ſounds of his own Language, and may, therefore, be ſuſpected of not being a fair judge in this point; yet, I imagine, there are evident grounds on which it may be ſhewn, that this charge againſt our Tongue has

been carried too far. The melody of our verſification, its power of ſupporting poetical numbers, without any aſſiſtance from rhyme, is alone a ſufficient proof that our Language is far from being unmuſical. Our verſe is, after the Italian, the moſt diverſified and harmonious of any of the modern dialects; unqueſtionably far beyond the French verſe, in variety, ſweetneſs, and melody. Mr. Sheridan has ſhewn, in his Lectures, that we abound more in vowel and diphthong ſounds, than moſt Languages; and theſe too, ſo divided into long and ſhort, as to afford a proper diverſity in the quantity of our ſyllables. Our conſonants, he obſerves, which appear ſo crowded to the eye on paper, often form combinations not diſagreeable to the ear in pronouncing; and, in particular, the objection which has been made to the frequent recurrence of the hiſſing conſonant *s* in our Language, is unjuſt and ill-founded. For, it has not been attended to, that very commonly, and in the final ſyllables eſpecially, this letter loſes altogether the hiſſing ſound, and is transformed into a *z*, which is one of the ſounds on which the ear reſts with pleaſure; as in *has*, *theſe*, *thoſe*, *loves*, *hears*, and innumerable more, where, though the letter *s* be retained in writing, it has really the power of *z*, not of the common *s*.

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After all, however, it muſt be admitted, that ſmoothneſs, or beauty of ſound, is not one of the diſtinguiſhing properties of the Engliſh Tongue. Though

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Though not incapable of being formed into melodious arrangements, yet ſtrength and expreſſiveneſs, more than grace, form its character. We incline, in general, to a ſhort pronunciation of our words, and have ſhortened the quantity of moſt of thoſe which we borrow from the Latin, as *orator*, *ſpectacle*, *theatre*, *liberty*, and ſuch like. Agreeable to this, is a remarkable peculiarity of Engliſh pronunciation, the throwing the accent farther back, that is, nearer the beginning of the word, than is done by any other nation. In Greek and Latin, no word is accented farther back than the third ſyllable from the end, or what is called the antepenult. But, in Engliſh, we have many words accented on the fourth, ſome on the fifth ſyllable, from the end, as *mémorable*, *convéniency*, *ámbulatory*, *prófitableneſs*. The general effect of this practice of haſtening the accent, or placing it ſo near the beginning of the word, is to give a briſk and a ſpirited, but at the ſame time a rapid and hurried, and not very muſical, tone to the whole pronunciation of a people.

THE Engliſh Tongue poſſeſſes, undoubtedly, this property, that it is the moſt ſimple in its form and conſtruction, of all the European dialects. It is free from all intricacy of caſes, declenſions, moods, and tenſes. Its words are ſubject to fewer variations from their original form, than thoſe of any other Language. Its ſubſtantives have no diſtinction of gender, except what nature has made,

and

and but one variation in caſe. Its adjectives admit of no change at all except what expreſſes the degree of compariſon. Its verbs, inſtead of running through all the varieties of antient conjugation, ſuffer no more than four or five changes in termination. By the help of a few prepoſitions and auxiliary verbs, all the purpoſes of ſignificancy in meaning are accompliſhed; while the words, for the moſt part, preſerve their form unchanged. The diſadvantages in point of elegance, brevity, and force, which follow from this ſtructure of our Language, I have before pointed out. But, at the ſame time, it muſt be admitted, that ſuch a ſtructure contributes to facility. It renders the acquiſition of our Language leſs laborious, the arrangement of our words more plain and obvious, the rules of our ſyntax fewer and more ſimple. LECT. IX.

I AGREE, indeed, with Dr. Lowth (Preface to his Grammar) in thinking that the ſimplicity and facility of our Language occaſion its being frequently written and ſpoken with leſs accuracy. It was neceſſary to ſtudy Languages which were of a more complex and artificial form, with greater care. The marks of gender and caſe, the varieties of conjugation and declenſion, the multiplied rules of ſyntax, were all to be attended to in Speech. Hence Language became more an object of art. It was reduced into form; a ſtandard was eſtabliſhed; and any departures from the ſtandard became conſpicuous. Whereas, among us,

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Language is hardly conſidered as an object of grammatical rule. We take it for granted, that a competent ſkill in it may be acquired without any ſtudy; and that, in a ſyntax ſo narrow and confined as ours, there is nothing which demands attention. Hence ariſes the habit of writing in a looſe and inaccurate manner.

I ADMIT, that no grammatical rules have ſufficient authority to controul the firm and eſtabliſhed uſage of Language. Eſtabliſhed cuſtom, in ſpeaking and writing, is the ſtandard to which we muſt at laſt reſort for determining every controverted point in Language and Style. But it will not follow from this, that grammatical rules are ſuperſeded as uſeleſs. In every Language, which has been in any degree cultivated, there prevails a certain ſtructure and analogy of parts, which is underſtood to give foundation to the moſt reputable uſage of Speech; and which, in all caſes, when uſage is looſe or dubious, poſſeſſes conſiderable authority. In every Language, there are rules of ſyntax which muſt be inviolably obſerved by all who would either write or ſpeak with any propriety. For ſyntax is no other than that arrangement of words in a ſentence, which renders the meaning of each word, and the relation of all the words to one another, moſt clear and intelligible.

ALL the rules of Latin Syntax, it is true, cannot be applied to our Language. Many of theſe rules aroſe

aroſe from the particular form of their Language, which occaſioned verbs or prepoſitions to govern, ſome the genitive, ſome the dative, ſome the accuſative or ablative caſe. But, abſtracting from theſe peculiarities, it is to be always remembered, that the chief and fundamental rules of ſyntax are common to the Engliſh as well as the Latin Tongue; and, indeed, belong equally to all Languages. For, in all Languages, the parts which compoſe Speech are eſſentially the ſame; ſubſtantives, adjectives, verbs, and connecting particles: And wherever theſe parts of Speech are found, there are certain neceſſary relations among them, which regulate their ſyntax, or the place which they ought to poſſeſs in a ſentence. Thus, in Engliſh, juſt as much as in Latin, the adjective muſt, by poſition, be made to agree with its ſubſtantive; and the verb muſt agree with its nominative in perſon and number; becauſe, from the nature of things, a word, which expreſſes either a quality or an action, muſt correſpond as cloſely as poſſible with the name of that thing whoſe quality, or whoſe action, it expreſſes. Two or more ſubſtantives, joined by a copulative, muſt always require the verbs or pronouns, to which they refer, to be placed in the plural number; otherwiſe, their common relation to theſe verbs or pronouns is not pointed out. An active verb muſt, in every Language, govern the accuſative; that is, clearly point out ſome ſubſtantive noun, as the object to which its action is directed. A relative pronoun muſt,

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LECT. IX. in every form of Speech, agree with its antecedent in gender, number, and perſon; and conjunctions, or connecting particles, ought always to couple like caſes and moods; that is, ought to join together words which are of the ſame form and ſtate with each other. I mention theſe, as a few exemplifications of that fundamental regard to ſyntax, which, even in ſuch a Language as ours, is abſolutely requiſite for writing or ſpeaking with any propriety.

WHATEVER the advantages or defects of the Engliſh Language be, as it is our own Language, it deſerves a high degree of our ſtudy and attention, both with regard to the choice of words which we employ, and with regard to the ſyntax, or the arrangement of theſe words in a ſentence. We know how much the Greeks and the Romans, in their moſt poliſhed and flouriſhing times, cultivated their own Tongues. We know how much ſtudy both the French, and the Italians, have beſtowed upon theirs. Whatever knowledge may be acquired by the ſtudy of other Languages, it can never be communicated with advantage, unleſs by ſuch as can write and ſpeak their own Language well. Let the matter of an author be ever ſo good and uſeful, his compoſitions will always ſuffer in the public eſteem, if his expreſſion be deficient in purity and propriety. At the ſame time, the attainment of a correct and elegant ſtyle, is an object which demands application and labour. If any

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imagine they can catch it merely by the ear, or acquire it by a ſlight peruſal of ſome of our good authors, they will find themſelves much diſappointed. The many errors, even in point of grammar, the many offences againſt purity of Language, which are committed by writers who are far from being contemptible, demonſtrate, that a careful ſtudy of the Language is previouſly requiſite, in all who aim at writing it properly*. LECT. IX.

* On this ſubject, the Reader ought to peruſe Dr. Lowth's Short Introduction to Engliſh Grammar, with Critical Notes; which is the grammatical performance of higheſt authority that has appeared in our time, and in which he will ſee, what I have ſaid concerning the inaccuracies in Language of ſome of our beſt writers, fully verified. In Dr. Campbell's Philoſophy of Rhetoric, he will likewiſe find many acute and ingenious obſervations, both on the Engliſh Language, and on Style in general. And Dr. Prieſtley's Rudiments of Engliſh Grammar will alſo be uſeful, by pointing out ſeveral of the errors into which writers are apt to fall.

LECTURE X.

STYLE.—PERSPICUITY AND PRECISION.

LECT. X. HAVING finiſhed the ſubject of Language, I now enter on the conſideration of Style, and the rules that relate to it.

IT is not eaſy to give a preciſe idea of what is meant by Style. The beſt definition I can give of it is, the peculiar manner in which a man expreſſes his conceptions, by means of Language. It is different from mere Language or words. The words which an author employs, may be proper and faultleſs; and his Style may, nevertheleſs, have great faults: it may be dry or ſtiff, or feeble, or affected. Style has always ſome reference to an author's manner of thinking. It is a picture of the ideas which riſe in his mind, and of the manner in which they riſe there; and, hence, when we are examining an author's compoſition, it is, in many caſes, extremely difficult to ſeparate the Style from the ſentiment. No wonder theſe two ſhould

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ſhould be ſo intimately connected, as Style is nothing elſe than that ſort of expreſſion which our thoughts moſt readily aſſume. Hence different countries have been noted for peculiarities of Style, ſuited to their different temper and genius. The eaſtern nations animated their Style with the moſt ſtrong and hyperbolical figures. The Athenians, a poliſhed and acute people, formed a Style accurate, clear, and neat. The Aſiatics, gay and looſe in their manners, affected a Style florid and diffuſe. The like ſort of characteriſtical differences are commonly remarked in the Style of the French, the Engliſh, and the Spaniards. In giving the general characters of Style, it is uſual to talk of a nervous, a feeble, or a ſpirited Style; which are plainly the characters of a writer's manner of thinking, as well as of expreſſing himſelf: ſo difficult it is to ſeparate theſe two things from one another. Of the general characters of Style, I am afterwards to diſcourſe; but it will be neceſſary to begin with examining the more ſimple qualities of it; from the aſſemblage of which, its more complex denominations, in a great meaſure, reſult.

ALL the qualities of a good Style may be ranged under two heads, Perſpicuity and Ornament. For all that can poſſibly be required of Language, is, to convey our ideas clearly to the minds of others, and, at the ſame time, in ſuch a dreſs, as by pleaſing and intereſting them, ſhall moſt effectually ſtrengthen the impreſſions which we ſeek to

LECT. X. make. When both theſe ends are anſwered, we certainly accompliſh every purpoſe for which we uſe Writing and Diſcourſe.

PERSPICUITY, it will be readily admitted, is the fundamental quality of Style *; a quality ſo eſſential in every kind of Writing, that for the want of it, nothing can atone. Without this, the richeſt ornaments of Style only glimmer through the dark; and puzzle inſtead of pleaſing the reader. This, therefore, muſt be our firſt object, to make our meaning clearly and fully underſtood, and underſtood without the leaſt difficulty. "Oratio," ſays Quintilian, "debet negligenter quoque au-"dientibus eſſe aperta; ut in animum audientis, "ſicut ſol in oculos, etiamſi in eum non intendatur, "occurrat. Quare, non ſolum ut intelligere poſſit, "ſed ne omino poſſit non intelligere curan-"dum †." If we are obliged to follow a writer with much care, to pauſe, and to read over his ſentences a ſecond time, in order to comprehend

* "Nobis prima ſit virtus, perſpicuitas, propria verba, "rectus ordo, non in longum dilata concluſio; nihil neque "deſit, neque ſuperfluat." QUINCTIL. lib. viii.

† "Diſcourſe ought always to be obvious, even to the moſt "careleſs and negligent hearer, ſo that the ſenſe ſhall ſtrike "his mind, as the light of the ſun does our eyes, though they "are not directed upwards to it. We muſt ſtudy, not only "that every hearer may underſtand us, but that it ſhall be im-"poſſible for him not to underſtand us."

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them fully, he will never pleaſe us long. Mankind are too indolent to reliſh ſo much labour. They may pretend to admire the author's depth, after they have diſcovered his meaning; but they will ſeldom be inclined to take up his work a ſecond time. LECT. X.

AUTHORS ſometimes plead the difficulty of their ſubject, as an excuſe for the want of Perſpicuity. But the excuſe can rarely, if ever, be admitted. For whatever a man conceives clearly, that it is in his power, if he will be at the trouble, to put into diſtinct propoſitions, or to expreſs clearly to others: and upon no ſubject ought any man to write, where he cannot think clearly. His ideas, indeed, may, very excuſably, be on ſome ſubjects incomplete or inadequate; but ſtill, as far as they go, they ought to be clear; and wherever this is the caſe, Perſpicuity, in expreſſing them, is always attainable. The obſcurity which reigns ſo much among many metaphyſical writers, is, for the moſt part, owing to the indiſtinctneſs of their own conceptions. They ſee the object but in a confuſed light; and, of courſe, can never exhibit it in a clear one to others.

PERSPICUITY in writing, is not to be conſidered as merely a ſort of negative virtue, or freedom from defect. It has higher merit: It is a degree of poſitive Beauty. We are pleaſed with an author, we conſider him as deſerving praiſe, who

LECT. X. frees us from all fatigue of ſearching for his meaning; who carries us through his ſubject without any embarraſſment or confuſion; whoſe ſtyle flows always like a limpid ſtream, where we ſee to the very bottom.

THE ſtudy of Perſpicuity requires attention, firſt, to ſingle words and phraſes, and then to the conſtruction of ſentences. I begin with treating of the firſt, and ſhall confine myſelf to it in this Lecture.

PERSPICUITY, conſidered with reſpect to words and phraſes, requires theſe three qualities in them; *Purity*, *Propriety*, and *Preciſion*.

'PURITY and Propriety of Language are often uſed indiſcriminately for each other; and, indeed, they are very nearly allied. A diſtinction, however, obtains between them. Purity, is the uſe of ſuch words, and ſuch conſtructions, as belong to the idiom of the Language which we ſpeak; in oppoſition to words and phraſes that are imported from other Languages, or that are obſolete, or new-coined, or uſed without proper authority. Propriety, is the ſelection of ſuch words in the Language, as the beſt and moſt eſtabliſhed uſage has appropriated to thoſe ideas which we intend to expreſs by them. It implies the correct and happy application of them, according to that uſage, in oppoſition to vulgariſms, or low expreſſions;

ſions; and to words and phraſes, which would be leſs ſignificant of the ideas that we mean to convey. Style may be pure, that is, it may all be ſtrictly Engliſh, without Scotticiſms or Galliciſms, or ungrammatical irregular expreſſions of any kind, and may, nevertheleſs, be deficient in Propriety. The words may be ill choſen; not adapted to the ſubject, not fully expreſſive of the author's ſenſe. He has taken all his words and phraſes from the general maſs of Engliſh Language; but he has made his ſelection among theſe words unhappily. Whereas, Style cannot be proper without being alſo pure; and where both Purity and Propriety meet, beſides making Style perſpicuous, they alſo render it graceful. There is no ſtandard, either of Purity or of Propriety, but the practice of the beſt writers and ſpeakers in the country.

When I mentioned obſolete or new-coined words as incongruous with Purity of Style, it will be eaſily underſtood, that ſome exceptions are to be made. On certain occaſions, they may have grace. Poetry admits of greater latitude than proſe, with reſpect to coining, or, at leaſt, new-compounding words; yet, even here, this liberty ſhould be uſed with a ſparing hand. In proſe, ſuch innovations are more hazardous, and have a worſe effect. They are apt to give Style an affected and conceited air; and ſhould never be ventured upon, except by ſuch, whoſe eſtabliſhed reputation gives them ſome degree of dictatorial power over Language.

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THE introduction of foreign and learned words, unleſs where neceſſity requires them, ſhould always be avoided. Barren Languages may need ſuch aſſiſtances; but ours is not one of theſe. Dean Swift, one of our moſt correct writers, valued himſelf much on uſing no words but ſuch as were of native growth: and his Language may, indeed, be conſidered as a ſtandard of the ſtricteſt Purity and Propriety, in the choice of words. At preſent, we ſeem to be departing from this ſtandard. A multitude of Latin words have, of late, been poured in upon us. On ſome occaſions, they give an appearance of elevation and dignity to Style. But often alſo, they render it ſtiff and forced: And, in general, a plain native Style, as it is more intelligible to all readers, ſo, by a proper management of words, it may be made equally ſtrong and expreſſive with this Latiniſed Engliſh.

LET us now conſider the import of Preciſion in Language, which, as it is the higheſt part of the quality denoted by Perſpicuity, merits a full explication; and the more, becauſe diſtinct ideas are, perhaps, not commonly formed about it.

THE exact import of Preciſion may be drawn from the etymology of the word. It comes from "præcidere," to cut off: It imports retrenching all ſuperfluities, and pruning the expreſſion ſo, as to exhibit neither more nor leſs than an exact copy of his idea who uſes it. I obſerved before,

that it is often difficult to ſeparate the qualities of Style from the qualities of Thought; and it is found ſo in this inſtance, for, in order to write with Preciſion, though this be properly a quality of Style, one muſt poſſeſs a very conſiderable degree of diſtinctneſs and accuracy in his manner of thinking. LECT. X.

THE words, which a man uſes to expreſs his ideas, may be faulty in three reſpects: They may either not expreſs that idea which the author intends, but ſome other which only reſembles, or is a-kin to it; or, they may expreſs that idea, but not quite fully and completely; or, they may expreſs it, together with ſomething more than he intends. Preciſion ſtands oppoſed to all theſe three faults; but chiefly to the laſt. In an author's writing with Propriety, his being free from the two former faults ſeems implied. The words which he uſes are proper; that is, they expreſs that idea which he intends, and they expreſs it fully; but to be Preciſe ſignifies, that they expreſs that idea, and no more. There is nothing in his words which introduces any foreign idea, any ſuperfluous unſeaſonable acceſſory, ſo as to mix it confuſedly with the principal object, and thereby to render our conception of that object looſe and indiſtinct. This requires a writer to have himſelf, a very clear apprehenſion of the object he means to repreſent to us; to have laid faſt hold of it in his mind; and never to waver in any one

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THE uſe and importance of Preciſion, may be deduced from the nature of the human mind. It never can view, clearly and diſtinctly, above one object at a time. If it muſt look at two or three together, eſpecially objects among which there is reſemblance or connection, it finds itſelf confuſed and embarraſſed. It cannot clearly perceive in what they agree, and in what they differ. Thus, were any object, ſuppoſe ſome animal, to be preſented to me, of whoſe ſtructure I wanted to form a diſtinct notion, I would deſire all its trappings to be taken off, I would require it to be brought before me by itſelf, and to ſtand alone, that there might be nothing to diſtract my attention. The ſame is the caſe with words. If when you would inform me of your meaning, you alſo tell me more than what conveys it; if you join foreign circumſtances to the principal object; if, by unneceſſarily varying the expreſſion, you ſhift the point of view, and make me ſee ſometimes the object itſelf, and ſometimes another thing that is connected with it; you thereby oblige me to look on ſeveral objects at once, and I loſe ſight of the principal. You load the animal you are ſhewing me, with ſo many trappings and collars, and bring ſo many of the ſame ſpecies before me, ſomewhat reſembling, and yet ſomewhat differing, that I ſee none of them clearly.

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THIS forms what is called a Looſe Style; and is the proper oppoſite to Preciſion. It generally ariſes from uſing a ſuperfluity of words. Feeble writers employ a multitude of words to make themſelves underſtood, as they think, more diſtinctly; and they only confound the reader. They are ſenſible of not having caught the preciſe expreſſion, to convey what they would ſignify; they do not, indeed, conceive their own meaning very preciſely themſelves; and, therefore, help it out, as they can, by this and the other word, which may, as they ſuppoſe, ſupply the defect, and bring you ſomewhat nearer to their idea: They are always going about it and about it, but never juſt hit the thing. The image, as they ſet it before you, is always ſeen double; and no double image is diſtinct. When an author tells me of his hero's *courage* in the day of battle, the expreſſion is preciſe, and I underſtand it fully. But if, from the deſire of multiplying words, he will needs praiſe his *courage* and *fortitude*; at the moment he joins theſe words together, my idea begins to waver. He means to expreſs one quality more ſtrongly; but he is, in truth, expreſſing two. *Courage* reſiſts danger; *fortitude* ſupports pain. The occaſion of exerting each of theſe qualities is different; and being led to think of both together, when only one of them ſhould be in my view, my view is rendered unſteady, and my conception of the objects indiſtinct.

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FROM what I have ſaid it appears that an author may, in a qualified ſenſe, be perſpicuous, while yet he is far from being preciſe. He uſes proper words, and proper arrangement; he gives you the idea as clear as he conceives it himſelf; and ſo far he is perſpicuous; but the ideas are not very clear in his own mind; they are looſe and general; and, therefore, cannot be expreſſed with Preciſion. All ſubjects do not equally require Preciſion. It is ſufficient, on many occaſions, that we have a general view of the meaning. The ſubject, perhaps, is of the known and familiar kind; and we are in no hazard of miſtaking the ſenſe of the author, though every word which he uſes be not preciſe and exact.

FEW authors, for inſtance, in the Engliſh Language, are more clear and perſpicuous, on the whole than Archbiſhop Tillotſon, and Sir William Temple; yet neither of them are remarkable for Preciſion. They are looſe and diffuſe; and accuſtomed to expreſs their meaning by ſeveral words, which ſhew you fully whereabouts it lies, rather than to ſingle out thoſe expreſſions which would convey clearly the idea they have in view, and no more. Neither, indeed, is Preciſion the prevailing character of Mr. Addiſon's Style; although he is not ſo deficient in this reſpect as the other two authors.

LORD SHAFTESBURY'S faults, in point of Preciſion, are much greater than Mr. Addiſon's; and the

the more unpardonable, becauſe he is a profeſſed philoſophical writer; who, as ſuch, ought, above all things, to have ſtudied Preciſion. His Style has both great beauties, and great faults; and, on the whole, is by no means a ſafe model for imitation. Lord Shafteſbury was well acquainted with the power of words; thoſe which he employs are generally proper and well-ſounding; he has great variety of them; and his arrangement, as ſhall be afterwards ſhewn, is commonly beautiful. His defect, in Preciſion, is not owing ſo much to indiſtinct or confuſed ideas, as to perpetual affectation. He is fond, to exceſs, of the pomp and parade of Language; he is never ſatisfied with expreſſing any thing clearly and ſimply; he muſt always give it the dreſs of ſtate and majeſty. Hence perpetual circumlocutions, and many words and phraſes employed to deſcribe ſomewhat, that would have been deſcribed much better by one of them. If he has occaſion to mention any perſon or author he very rarely mentions him by his proper name. In the treatiſe, entitled, Advice to an Author, he deſcants for two or three pages together upon Ariſtotle, without once naming him in any other way, than the Maſter Critic, the Mighty Genius and Judge of Art, the Prince of Critics, the Grand Maſter of Art, and Conſummate Philologiſt. In the ſame way, the Grand Poetic Sire, the Philoſophical Patriarch, and his Diſciple of Noble Birth and lofty Genius, are the only names by which he condeſcends to diſtinguiſh Homer, Socrates,

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crates, and Plato, in another paſſage of the ſame treatiſe. This method of diſtinguiſhing perſons is extremely affected; but it is not ſo contrary to Preciſion, as the frequent circumlocutions he employs for all moral ideas; attentive, on every occaſion, more to the pomp of Language, than to the clearneſs which he ought to have ſtudied as a philoſopher. The moral ſenſe, for inſtance, after he had once defined it, was a clear term; but how vague becomes the idea, when, in the next page, he calls it, "That natural affection, and "anticipating fancy, which makes the ſenſe of "right and wrong?" Self-examination, or reflection on our own conduct, is an idea conceived with eaſe; but when it is wrought into all the forms of "A man's dividing himſelf into two parties, be- "coming a ſelf dialogiſt, entering into partnerſhip "with himſelf, forming the dual number practi- "cally within himſelf;" we hardly know what to make of it. On ſome occaſions, he ſo adorns, or rather loads with words, the plaineſt and ſimpleſt propoſitions, as, if not to obſcure, at leaſt to enfeeble them.

In the following paragraph, for example, of the Inquiry concerning Virtue, he means to ſhew, that, by every ill action we hurt our mind, as much as one who ſhould ſwallow poiſon, or give himſelf a wound, would hurt his body. Obſerve what a redundancy of words he pours forth: "Now, if "the fabric of the mind or temper appeared to us,

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" ſuch as it really is; if we ſaw it impoſſible to " remove hence any one good or orderly affection, " or to introduce any ill or diſorderly one, without " drawing on, in ſome degree, that diſſolute ſtate " which, at its height, is confeſſed to be ſo miſe- " rable; it would then, undoubtedly, be confeſſed, " that ſince no ill, immoral, or unjuſt action can " be committed, without either a new inroad and " breach on the temper and paſſions, or a further " advancing of that execution already done: who- " ever did ill, or acted in prejudice to his inte- " grity, good-nature, or worth, would, of neceſſity, " act with greater cruelty towards himſelf, than " he who ſcrupled not to ſwallow what was poiſon- " ous, or who, with his own hands, ſhould volun- " tarily mangle or wound his outward form or " conſtitution, natural limbs or body *." Here, to commit a bad action, is, firſt, " To remove a " good and orderly affection, and to introduce an " ill or diſorderly one;" next, it is, " To commit " an action that is ill, immoral, and unjuſt;" and in the next line, it is, " To do ill, or to act in " prejudice of integrity, good nature, and worth;" nay, ſo very ſimple a thing as a man's wounding himſelf, is, " To mangle, or wound, his outward " form or conſtitution, his natural limbs or " body." Such ſuperfluity of words is diſguſtful to every reader of correct taſte; and ſerves no pur- poſe but to embarraſs and perplex the ſenſe. This

* Characteriſt. Vol. II. p. 85.

LECT. X. fort of Style is elegantly deſcribed by Quinctilian, "Eſt in quibuſdam turba inanium verborum, qui "dum communem loquendi morem reformidant, "ducti ſpecie nitoris, circumeunt omnia copioſa "loquacitate quæ dicere volunt *." Lib. vii. cap. 2.

THE great ſource of a looſe Style, in oppoſition to Preciſion, is the injudicious uſe of thoſe words termed Synonymous. They are called Synonymous, becauſe they agree in expreſſing one principal idea; but, for the moſt part, if not always, they expreſs it with ſome diverſity in the circumſtances. They are varied by ſome acceſſory idea which every word introduces, and which forms the diſtinction between them. Hardly, in any Language, are there two words that convey preciſely the ſame idea; a perſon thoroughly converſant in the propriety of the Language, will always be able to obſerve ſomething that diſtinguiſhes them. As they are like different ſhades of the ſame colour, an accurate writer can employ them to great advantage, by uſing them ſo as to heighten and to finiſh the picture, which he gives us. He ſupplies by one, what was wanting in the other, to the force,

* "A crowd of unmeaning words is brought together, by "ſome authors, who, afraid of expreſſing themſelves after a "common and ordinary manner, and allured by an appearance "of ſplendour, ſurround every thing which they mean to ſay "with a certain copious loquacity."

or

or to the luſtre of the image which he means to exhibit. But in order to this end, he muſt be extremely attentive to the choice which he makes of them. For the bulk of writers are very apt to confound them with each other; and to employ them careleſsly, merely for the ſake of filling up a period, or of rounding and diverſifying the Language, as if their ſignification were exactly the ſame, while, in truth, it is not. Hence a certain miſt, and indiſtinctneſs, is unwarily thrown over Style.

In the Latin Language, there are no two words we ſhould more readily take to be ſynonymous, than *amare* and *diligere*. Cicero, however, has ſhewn us, that there is a very clear diſtinction betwixt them. "Quid ergo," ſays he, in one of his epiſtles, "tibi commendem eum quem tu ipſe "diligis? Sed tamen ut ſcires eum non a me *diligi* "ſolum, verum etiam *amari*, ob eam rem tibi "hæc ſcribo *." In the ſame manner, *tutus* and *ſecurus*, are words which we ſhould readily confound; yet their meaning is different. *Tutus* ſignifies out of danger; *ſecurus*, free from the dread of it. Seneca has elegantly marked this diſtinction; "Tuta ſcelera eſſe poſſunt, ſecura non "poſſunt †." In our own Language, very many inſtances might be given of a difference in meaning

* Ad. Famil. l. 13. Ep. 47. † Epiſ. 97.

LECT. X. among words reputed Synonymous; and, as the ſubject is of importance, I ſhall now point out ſome of theſe. The inſtances which I am to give, may themſelves be of uſe; and they will ſerve to ſhew the neceſſity of attending, with care and ſtrictneſs, to the exact import of words, if ever we would write with Propriety or Preciſion.

Auſterity, Severity, Rigour. Auſterity, relates to the manner of living; Severity, of thinking; Rigour, of puniſhing. To auſterity is oppoſed Effeminacy; to Severity, Relaxation; to Rigour, Clemency. A Hermit is auſtere in his life; a Caſuiſt, ſevere in his application of religion or law; a Judge, rigorous in his ſentences.

Cuſtom, Habit. Cuſtom, reſpects the action; Habit, the actor. By Cuſtom, we mean the frequent repetition of the ſame act; by Habit, the effect which that repetition produces on the mind or body. By the Cuſtom of walking often in the ſtreets, one acquires a Habit of idleneſs.

Surpriſed, aſtoniſhed, amazed, confounded. I am ſurpriſed, with what is new or unexpected; I am aſtoniſhed, at what is vaſt or great; I am amazed, with what is incomprehenſible; I am confounded, by what is ſhocking or terrible.

Deſiſt, renounce, quit, leave off. Each of theſe words implies, ſome purſuit or object relinquiſhed; but

but from different motives. We deſiſt, from the difficulty of accompliſhing. We renounce, on account of the diſagreeableneſs of the object, or purſuit. We quit, for the ſake of ſome other thing which intereſts us more; and we leave off, becauſe we are weary of the deſign. A politician deſiſts from his deſigns, when he finds they are impracticable; he renounces the court, becauſe he has been affronted by it; he quits ambition for ſtudy or retirement; and leaves off his attendance on the great, as he becomes old and weary of it. LECT. X.

Pride, Vanity. Pride, makes us eſteem ourſelves; Vanity, makes us deſire the eſteem of others. It is juſt to ſay, as Dean Swift has done, that a man is too proud to be vain.

Haughtineſs, Diſdain. Haughtineſs, is founded on the high opinion we entertain of ourſelves; Diſdain, on the low opinion we have of others.

To diſtinguiſh, to ſeparate. We diſtinguiſh, what we want not to confound with another thing; we ſeparate, what we want to remove from it. Objects are diſtinguiſhed from one another, by their qualities. They are ſeparated, by the diſtance of time or place.

To weary, to fatigue. The continuance of the ſame thing wearies us; labour fatigues us. I am weary with ſtanding; I am fatigued with walking.

LECT. X. A ſuitor wearies us by his perſeverance; fatigues us by his importunity.

To abhor, to deteſt. To abhor, imports, ſimply, ſtrong diſlike; to deteſt, imports alſo ſtrong diſapprobation. One abhors being in debt; he deteſts treachery.

To invent, to diſcover. We invent things that are new; we diſcover what was before hidden. Galileo invented the teleſcope; Harvey diſcovered the circulation of the blood.

Only, alone. Only, imports that there is no other of the ſame kind; alone, imports being accompanied by no other. An only child, is one who has neither brother nor ſiſter; a child alone, is one who is left by itſelf. There is a difference, therefore, in preciſe Language, betwixt theſe two phraſes, "Virtue only makes us happy;" and, "Virtue alone makes us happy." Virtue only makes us happy, imports, that nothing elſe can do it. Virtue alone makes us happy, imports, that virtue, by itſelf, or unaccompanied with other advantages, is ſufficient to do it.

Entire, complete. A thing is entire, by wanting none of its parts; complete, by wanting none of the appendages that belong to it. A man may have an entire houſe to himſelf; and yet not have one complete apartment.

Tranquillity,

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Tranquillity, Peace, Calm. Tranquillity, reſpects a ſituation free from trouble, conſidered in itſelf; Peace the ſame ſituation with reſpect to any cauſes that might interrupt it; Calm, with regard to a diſturbed ſituation going before, or following it. A good man enjoys tranquillity, in himſelf; Peace, with others; and Calm, after the ſtorm.

A Difficulty, an Obſtacle. A Difficulty, embarraſſes; an Obſtacle, ſtops us. We remove the one; we ſurmount the other. Generally, the firſt, expreſſes ſomewhat ariſing from the nature and circumſtances of the affair; the ſecond ſomewhat ariſing from a foreign cauſe. Philip found Difficulty in managing the Athenians from the nature of their diſpoſitions; but the eloquence of Demoſthenes was the greateſt Obſtacle to his deſigns.

Wiſdom, Prudence. Wiſdom, leads us to ſpeak and act what is moſt proper. Prudence, prevents our ſpeaking or acting improperly. A wiſe man, employs the moſt proper means for ſucceſs; a prudent man, the ſafeſt means for not being brought into danger.

Enough, Sufficient. Enough, relates to the quantity which one wiſhes to have of any thing. Sufficient, relates to the uſe that is to be made of it. Hence, Enough, generally imports a greater

LECT. X. quantity than Sufficient does. The covetous man never has enough; although he has what is ſufficient for nature.

To avow, to acknowledge, to confeſs. Each of theſe words imports the affirmation of a fact, but in very different circumſtances. To avow, ſuppoſes the perſon to glory in it; to acknowledge, ſuppoſes a ſmall degree of faultineſs, which the acknowledgment compenſates; to confeſs, ſuppoſes a higher degree of crime. A patriot avows his oppoſition to a bad miniſter, and is applauded; a gentleman acknowledges his miſtake, and is forgiven; a priſoner confeſſes the crime he is accuſed of, and is puniſhed.

To remark, to obſerve. We remark, in the way of attention, in order to remember; we obſerve, in the way of examination, in order to judge. A traveller remarks the moſt ſtriking objects he ſees; a general obſerves all the motions of his enemy.

Equivocal, Ambiguous. An Equivocal Expreſſion is, one which has one ſenſe open, and deſigned to be underſtood; another ſenſe concealed, and underſtood only by the perſon who uſes it. An Ambiguous Expreſſion is, one which has apparently two ſenſes, and leaves us at a loſs which of them to give it. An Equivocal Expreſſion is uſed

uſed with an intention to deceive; an Ambiguous one, when it is uſed with deſign, is, with an intention not to give full information. An honeſt man will never employ an equivocal expreſſion; a confuſed man may often utter ambiguous ones, without any deſign. I ſhall give only one inſtance more.

With, *By*. Both theſe particles expreſs the connexion between ſome inſtrument, or means of effecting an end, and the agent who employs it; but *with*, expreſſes a more cloſe and immediate connection; *by*, a more remote one. We kill a man *with* a ſword; he dies *by* violence. The criminal is bound *with* ropes *by* the executioner. The proper diſtinction in the uſe of theſe particles, is elegantly marked in a paſſage of Dr. Robertſon's Hiſtory of Scotland. When one of the old Scottiſh kings was making an inquiry into the tenure *by* which his nobles held their lands, they ſtarted up, and drew their ſwords: "*By* theſe," ſaid they, "we acquired our lands, and *with* theſe, we will "defend them." *By* theſe we acquired our "lands;" ſignifies the more remote means of acquiſition by force and martial deed; and, "*with* "theſe we will defend them;" ſignifies the immediate direct inſtrument, the ſword, which they would employ in their defence.

THESE are inſtances of words in our Language, which, by careleſs writers, are apt to be employed

as

LECT. X. as perfectly ſynonymous, and yet are not ſo. Their ſignifications approach, but are not preciſely the ſame. The more the diſtinction in the meaning of ſuch words is weighed, and attended to, the more clearly and forcibly ſhall we ſpeak or write *.

FROM all that has been ſaid on this head, it will now appear, that, in order to write or ſpeak with Preciſion, two things are eſpecially requiſite; one, that an author's own ideas be clear and diſtinct; and the other, that we have an exact and full comprehenſion of the force of thoſe words which he employs. Natural genius is here required; labour and attention ſtill more. Dean Swift is one of the authors, in our Language, moſt diſtinguiſhed for Preciſion of Style. In his writings, we ſeldom or never find vague expreſ-

* In French, there is a very uſeful treatiſe on the ſubject, the Abbé Girard's *Synonymes Françoiſes*, in which he has made a large collection of ſuch apparent Synonymes in the Language, and ſhewn, with much accuracy, the difference in their ſignification. It is to be wiſhed, that ſome ſuch work were undertaken for our tongue, and executed with equal taſte and judgment. Nothing would contribute more to preciſe and elegant writing. In the mean time, this French Treatiſe may be peruſed with conſiderable profit. It will accuſtom perſons to weigh, with attention, the force of words; and will ſuggeſt ſeveral diſtinctions betwixt ſynonymous terms in our own language, analogous to thoſe which he has pointed out in the French; and, accordingly, ſeveral of the inſtances above given were ſuggeſted by the work of this author.

ſions,

ſions, and ſynonymous words, careleſsly thrown together. His meaning is always clear, and ſtrongly marked. LECT. X.

I HAD occaſion to obſerve before, that, though all ſubjects of writing or diſcourſe demand Perſpicuity, yet all do not require the ſame degree of that exact Preciſion, which I have endeavoured to explain. It is, indeed, in every ſort of writing, a great beauty to have, at leaſt, ſome meaſure of Preciſion, in diſtinction from that looſe profuſion of words which imprints no clear idea on the reader's mind. But we muſt, at the ſame time, be on your guard, leſt too great a ſtudy of Preciſion, eſpecially in ſubjects where it is not ſtrictly requiſite, betray us into a dry and barren Style; leſt, from the deſire of pruning too cloſely, we retrench all copiouſneſs and ornament. Some degree of this failing may, perhaps, be remarked in Dean Swift's ſerious works. Attentive only to exhibit his ideas clear and exact, reſting wholly on his ſenſe and diſtinctneſs, he appears to reject, diſdainfully, all embelliſhment; which, on ſome occaſions, may be thought to render his manner ſomewhat hard and dry. To unite copiouſneſs and Preciſion, to be flowing and graceful, and at the ſame time, correct and exact in the choice of every word, is, no doubt, one of the higheſt and moſt difficult attainments in writing. Some kinds of compoſition may require more of Copiouſneſs and

LECT. X. and Ornament; others, more of Precifion and Accuracy; nay, in the ſame compoſition, the different parts of it may demand a proper variation of manner. But we muſt ſtudy never to ſacrifice, totally, any one of theſe qualities to the other; and, by a proper management, both of them may be made fully conſiſtent, if our own ideas be preciſe, and our knowledge and ſtock of words be, at the ſame time, extenſive.

LECTURE XI.

STRUCTURE OF SENTENCES.

HAVING begun to treat of Style, in the laſt Lecture I conſidered its fundamental quality, Perſpicuity. What I have ſaid of this, relates chiefly to the choice of Words. From Words I proceed to Sentences; and as, in all writing and diſcourſe, the proper compoſition and ſtructure of Sentences is of the higheſt importance, I ſhall treat of this fully. Though Perſpicuity be the general head under which I, at preſent, conſider Language, I ſhall not confine myſelf to this quality alone, in Sentences, but ſhall inquire alſo, what is requiſite for their Grace and Beauty: that I may bring together, under one view, all that ſeems neceſſary to be attended to in the conſtruction and arrangement of words in a Sentence.

IT is not eaſy to give an exact definition of a Sentence, or Period, farther, than as it always implies ſome one complete propoſition or enunciation of thought. Ariſtotle's definition is, in the main,

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main, a good one: "Λεξις εχουσα αρχην και τελευτην "καθ' αυτην, και μεγεθος ευσυνοπτον: "A form of "Speech which hath a beginning and an end within "itſelf, and is of ſuch a length as to be eaſily "comprehended at once." This, however, admits of a great latitude. For a Sentence, or Period, conſiſts always of component parts, which are called its members; and as theſe members may be either few or many, and may be connected in ſeveral different ways, the ſame thought, or mental propoſition, may often be either brought into one Sentence, or ſplit into two or three, without the material breach of any rule.

THE firſt variety that occurs in the conſideration of Sentences, is, the diſtinction of long and ſhort ones. The preciſe length of Sentences, as to the numbers of words, or the number of members, which may enter into them, cannot be aſcertained by any definite meaſure. At the ſame time, it is obvious, there may be an extreme on either ſide. Sentences, immoderately long, and conſiſting of too many members, always tranſgreſs ſome one or other of the rules which I ſhall mention ſoon, as neceſſary to be obſerved in every good Sentence. In diſcourſes that are to be ſpoken, regard muſt be had to the eaſineſs of pronunciation, which is not conſiſtent with too long periods. In compoſitions where pronunciation has no place, ſtill, however, by uſing long Periods too frequently, an author overloads the reader's ear, and fatigues his attention.

tion. For long Periods require, evidently, more attention than ſhort ones, in order to perceive clearly the connection of the ſeveral parts, and to take in the whole at one view. At the ſame time, there may be an exceſs in too many ſhort Sentences alſo; by which the ſenſe is ſplit and broken, the connection of thought weakened, and the memory burdened, by preſenting to it a long ſucceſſion of minute objects. LECT. XI.

WITH regard to the length and conſtruction of Sentences, the French critics make a very juſt diſtinction of Style, into *Style Periodique*, and *Style Coupé*. The *Style Periodique* is, where the Sentences are compoſed of ſeveral members linked together, and hanging upon one another, ſo that the ſenſe of the whole is not brought out till the cloſe. This is the moſt pompous, muſical, and oratorical manner of compoſing; as in the following Sentences of Sir William Temple: "If you "look about you, and conſider the lives of others "as well as your own; if you think how few are "born with honour, and how many die without "name or children; how little beauty we ſee, and "how few friends we hear of; how many diſeaſes, "and how much poverty there is in the world; "you will fall down upon your knees, and, in- "ſtead of repining at one affliction, will admire "ſo many bleſſings which you have received from "the hand of God." (Letter to Lady Eſſex.) Cicero abounds with ſentences conſtructed after this manner.

THE

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THE *Style Coupé* is, where the ſenſe is formed into ſhort independent propoſitions, each complete within itſelf; as in the following of Mr. Pope: "I confeſs, it was want of conſideration that made "me an author. I writ, becauſe it amuſed me. "I corrected, becauſe it was as pleaſant to me to "correct as to write. I publiſhed, becauſe I was "told, I might pleaſe ſuch as it was a credit to "pleaſe." (Preface to his Works.) This is very much the French method of writing; and always ſuits gay and eaſy ſubjects. The *Style Periodique*, gives an air of gravity and dignity to compoſition. The *Style Coupé*, is more lively and ſtriking. According to the nature of the compoſition, therefore, and the general character it ought to bear, the one or other may be predominant. But, in almoſt every kind of compoſition, the great rule is to intermix them. For the ear tires of either of them when too long continued: Whereas, by a proper mixture of long and ſhort Periods, the ear is gratified, and a certain ſprightlineſs is joined with majeſty in our Style. "Non ſemper," ſays Cicero (deſcribing, very expreſſively, theſe two different kinds of Styles, of which I have been ſpeaking), "non ſemper utendum eſt perpetuitate, & quaſi "converſione verborum; ſed ſæpe carpenda mem-"bris minutioribus oratio eſt *."

* "It is not proper always to employ a continued train, "and a ſort of regular compaſs of phraſes; but ſtyle ought "to be often broken down into ſmaller members."

THIS

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THIS variety is of ſo great conſequence, that it muſt be ſtudied, not only in the ſucceſſion of long and ſhort Sentences, but in the ſtructure of our Sentences alſo. A train of Sentences, conſtructed in the ſame manner, and with the ſame number of members, whether long or ſhort, ſhould never be allowed to ſucceed one another. However muſical each of them may be, it has a better effect to introduce even a diſcord, than to cloy the ear with the repetition of ſimilar ſounds: for, nothing is ſo tireſome as perpetual uniformity. In this article of the conſtruction and diſtribution of his Sentences, Lord Shaftſbury has ſhewn great art. In the laſt Lecture, I obſerved, that he is often guilty of ſacrificing preciſion of ſtyle to pomp of expreſſion; and that there runs through his whole manner a ſtiffneſs and affectation, which render him very unfit to be conſidered as a general model. But, as his ear was fine, and as he was extremely attentive to every thing that is elegant, he has ſtudied the proper intermixture of long and ſhort Sentences, with variety and harmony in their ſtructure, more than any other Engliſh author: and for this part of compoſition he deſerves attention.

FROM theſe general obſervations, let us now deſcend to a more particular conſideration of the qualities that are required to make a Sentence perfect. So much depends upon the proper conſtruction of Sentences, that, in every ſort of compoſition, we cannot be too ſtrict in our attentions to

LECT. XI. it. For, be the ſubject what it will, if the Sentences be conſtructed in a clumſy, perplexed, or feeble manner, it is impoſſible that a work, compoſed of ſuch Sentences, can be read with pleaſure, or even with profit. Whereas, by giving attention to the rules which relate to this part of ſtyle, we acquire the habit of expreſſing ourſelves with perſpicuity and elegance; and if a diſorder chance to ariſe in ſome of our Sentences, we immediately ſee where it lies, and are able to rectify it *.

THE properties moſt eſſential to a perfect Sentence, ſeem to me, the four following: 1. Clearneſs and Preciſion. 2. Unity. 3. Strength. 4. Harmony. Each of theſe I ſhall illuſtrate ſeparately, and at ſome length.

THE firſt is, Clearneſs and Preciſion. The leaſt failure here, the leaſt degree of ambiguity,

* On the Structure of Sentences, the Antients appear to have beſtowed a great deal of attention and care. The Treatiſe of Demetrius Phalereus, περὶ Ἑρμηνείας abounds with obſervations upon the choice and collocation of words, carried to ſuch a degree of nicety, as would frequently ſeem to us minute. The Treatiſe of Dionyſius of Halicarnaſſus, περὶ συνθέσεως ὀνομάτων, is more maſterly; but is chiefly confined to the muſical ſtructure of Periods; a ſubject, for which the Greek Language afforded much more aſſiſtance to their writers than our Tongue admits. On the arrangement of words, in Engliſh Sentences, the xviiith chapter of Lord Kaims's Elements of Criticiſm ought to be conſulted; and alſo, the 2d Volume of Dr. Campbell's Philoſophy of Rhetoric.

which

which leaves the mind in any ſort of ſuſpenſe as to the meaning, ought to be avoided with the greateſt care; nor is it ſo eaſy a matter to keep always clear of this, as one might, at firſt, imagine. Ambiguity ariſes from two cauſes: either from a wrong choice of words, or a wrong collocation of them. Of the choice of words, as far as regards Perſpicuity, I treated fully in the laſt Lecture. Of the collocation of them, I am now to treat. The firſt thing to be ſtudied here, is, to obſerve exactly the Rules of grammar, as far as theſe can guide us. But as the grammar of our Language is not extenſive, there may often be an ambiguous collocation of words, where there is no tranſgreſſion of any grammatical rule. The relations which the words, or members of a period, bear to one another, cannot be pointed out in Engliſh, as in the Greek or Latin, by means of termination; it is aſcertained only by the poſition in which they ſtand. Hence a capital rule in the arrangement of Sentences is, that the words or members moſt nearly related, ſhould be placed in the Sentence, as near to each other as poſſible; ſo as to make their mutual relation clearly appear. This is a rule not always obſerved, even by good writers, as ſtrictly as it ought to be. It will be neceſſary to produce ſome inſtances, which will both ſhew the importance of this rule, and make the application of it underſtood. LECT. XI.

FIRST, In the poſition of adverbs, which are uſed to qualify the ſignification of ſomething which either

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either precedes or follows them, there is often a good deal of nicety. "By greatneſs," ſays Mr. Addiſon, in the Spectator, No. 412, "I do not "only mean the bulk of any ſingle object, but "the largeneſs of a whole view." Here the place of the adverb *only*, renders it a limitation of the following word, mean. "I do not only mean." The queſtion may then be put, What does he more than mean? Had he placed it after *bulk*, ſtill it would have been wrong. "I do not mean "the *bulk only* of any ſingle object." For we might then aſk, what does he mean more than the bulk? Is it the colour? or any other property? Its proper place, undoubtedly, is, after the word *object*. "By greatneſs, I do not mean the bulk of any "ſingle object only;" for then, when we put the queſtion, What more does he mean than the bulk of a ſingle object? the anſwer comes out exactly as the author intends, and gives it; "the large- "neſs of a whole view."—"Theiſm," ſays Lord Shaftſbury, "can only be oppoſed to polytheiſm, "or atheiſm." Does he mean that theiſm is capable of nothing elſe, except being oppoſed to polytheiſm or atheiſm? This is what his words literally import, through the wrong collocation of *only*. He ſhould have ſaid, "Theiſm can be oppoſed "only to polytheiſm or theiſm."—In like manner, Dean Swift (Project for the Advancement of Religion), "The Romans underſtood liberty, "at leaſt, as well as we." Theſe words are capable of two different ſenſes, according as the emphaſis, in reading them, is laid upon *liberty*, or upon

upon *at leaſt*. In the firſt caſe, they will ſignify, that whatever other things we may underſtand better than the Romans, *liberty*, at leaſt, was one thing which they underſtood as well as we. In the ſecond caſe, they will import, that liberty was underſtood, *at leaſt* as well by them as by us; meaning, that by them it was better underſtood. If this laſt, as I make no doubt, was Dean Swift's own meaning, the ambiguity would have been avoided, and the ſenſe rendered independent of the manner of pronouncing, by arranging the words thus: "the Romans underſtood liberty, as well, at "leaſt, as we." The fact is, with reſpect to ſuch adverbs, as, *only*, *wholly*, *at leaſt*, and the reſt of that tribe, that in common diſcourſe, the tone and emphaſis we uſe in pronouncing them, generally ſerves to ſhew their reference, and to make the meaning clear; and hence, we acquire a habit of throwing them in looſely in the courſe of a period. But, in writing, where a man ſpeaks to the eye and not to the ear, he ought to be more accurate; and ſo to connect thoſe adverbs with the words which they qualify, as to put his meaning out of doubt upon the firſt inſpection. LECT. XI.

SECONDLY, When a circumſtance is interpoſed in the middle of a Sentence, it ſometimes requires attention how to place it, ſo as to diveſt it of all ambiguity. For inſtance: "Are theſe deſigns," (ſays Lord Bolingbroke, Diſſert. on Parties, Dedicat.) "Are theſe deſigns, which any man,

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" who is born a Briton, in any circumſtances, in " any ſituation, ought to be aſhamed or afraid to " avow?" Here we are left at a loſs, whether theſe words, " *in any circumſtances, in any ſituation,*" are connected with, " a man born in Britain, in any " circumſtances, or ſituation," or with that man's " avowing his deſigns, in any circumſtances, or " ſituation into which he may be brought?" If the latter, as ſeems moſt probable, was intended to be the meaning, the arrangement ought to have been conducted thus: " Are theſe deſigns, which any " man who is born a Briton, ought to be aſhamed " or afraid, in any circumſtances, in any ſituation, to " avow?" But,

THIRDLY, Still more attention is required to the proper diſpoſition of the relative pronouns, *who*, *which*, *what*, *whoſe*, and of all thoſe particles which expreſs the connection of the parts of Speech with one another. As all reaſoning depends upon this connection, we cannot be too accurate and preciſe here. A ſmall error may overcloud the meaning of the whole Sentence; and even where the meaning is intelligible, yet where theſe relative particles are out of their proper place, we always find ſomething awkward and disjointed in the Structure of the Sentence. Thus, in the Spectator, No. 54. " This kind of wit," ſays Mr. Addiſon, " was very much in vogue among " our countrymen, about an age or two ago, who " did not practiſe it for any oblique reaſon, but " purely

" purely for the ſake of being witty." We are at no loſs about the meaning here; but the conſtruction would evidently be mended by diſpoſing of the circumſtance, " about an age or two ago," in ſuch a manner as not to ſeparate the relative *who* from its antecedent *our countrymen;* in this way: " About an age or two ago, this kind of wit was " very much in vogue among our countrymen, " who did not practiſe it for any oblique reaſon, " but purely for the ſake of being witty."—Spectator, No. 412. " We no where meet with a " more glorious and pleaſing ſhow in nature, than " what appears in the heavens at the riſing and " ſetting of the ſun, *which* is wholly made up of " thoſe different ſtains of light, that ſhew themſelves in clouds of a different ſituation." *Which* is here deſigned to connect with the word *ſhow*, as its antecedent; but it ſtands ſo wide from it, that without a careful attention to the ſenſe, we ſhould be naturally led, by the rules of ſyntax, to refer it to the riſing and ſetting of the ſun, or to the ſun itſelf; and, hence, an indiſtinctneſs is thrown over the whole Sentence. The following paſſage in biſhop Sherlock's Sermons (Vol. II. Serm. 15.) is ſtill more cenſurable: " It is folly to pretend to " arm ourſelves againſt the accidents of life, by " heaping up treaſures, which nothing can protect " us againſt, but the good providence of our " Heavenly Father." *Which*, always refers grammatically to the immediately preceding ſubſtantive, which here is, " treaſures;" and this would make

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nonſenſe of the whole Period. Every one feels this impropriety. The Sentence ought to have ſtood thus: "It is folly to pretend, by heaping "up treaſures, to arm ourſelves againſt the acci- "dents of life, which nothing can protect us "againſt, but the good providence of our Heavenly "Father."

Of the like nature is the following inaccuracy of Dean Swift's. He is recommending to young clergymen, to write their ſermons fully and diſtinctly. "Many," ſays he, "act ſo directly "contrary to this method, that from a habit of "ſaving time and paper, which they acquired at "the univerſity, they write in ſo diminutive a "manner, that they can hardly read what they "have written." He certainly does not mean, that they had acquired time and paper at the univerſity, but that they had acquired this habit there; and therefore his words ought to have run thus: "From a habit which they have acquired at the "univerſity of ſaving time and paper, they write "in ſo diminutive a manner." In another paſſage, the ſame author has left his meaning altogether uncertain, by miſplacing a relative. It is in the concluſion of his letter to a member of parliament, concerning the Sacramental Teſt: "Thus I have "fairly given you, Sir, my own opinion, as well "as that of a great majority of both houſes here, "relating to this weighty affair; upon which I "am confident you may ſecurely reckon." Now I aſk,

I aſk, what it is he would have his correſpondent to reckon upon, ſecurely? The natural conſtruction leads to theſe words, "this weighty affair." But, as it would be difficult to make any ſenſe of this, it is more probable he meant that the majority of both houſes might be ſecurely reckoned upon; though certainly this meaning, as the words are arranged, is obſcurely expreſſed. The Sentence would be amended by arranging it thus; "Thus, Sir, I have given you my own opinion, "relating to this weighty affair, as well as that "of a great majority of both houſes here; "upon which I am confident you may ſecurely "reckon." LECT. XI.

SEVERAL other inſtances might be given; but I reckon thoſe which I have produced ſufficient to make the rule underſtood, that, in the conſtruction of Sentences, one of the firſt things to be attended to, is, the marſhalling of the words in ſuch order as ſhall moſt clearly mark the relation of the ſeveral parts of the Sentence to one another; particularly, that adverbs ſhall always be made to adhere cloſely to the words which they are intended to qualify; that, where a circumſtance is thrown in, it ſhall never hang looſe in the midſt of a period, but be determined by its place to one or other member of it; and that every relative word which is uſed, ſhall inſtantly preſent its antecedent to the mind of the reader, without the leaſt obſcurity. I have mentioned theſe three caſes, becauſe

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WITH regard to Relatives, I muſt farther obſerve, that obſcurity often ariſes from the too frequent repetition of them, particularly of the pronouns, *who*, and *they*, and *them*, and *theirs*, when we have occaſion to refer to different perſons; as, in the following ſentence of archbiſhop Tillotſon (Vol. I. Serm. 42.): "Men look with an evil "eye upon the good that is in others; and think "that their reputation obſcures them, and their "commendable qualities ſtand in their light; and "therefore they do what they can to caſt a cloud "over them, that the bright ſhining of their vir-"tues may not obſcure them." This is altogether careleſs writing. It renders ſtyle often obſcure, always embarraſſed and inelegant. When we find theſe perſonal pronouns crowding too faſt upon us, we have often no method left, but to throw the whole ſentence into ſome other form, which may avoid thoſe frequent references to perſons who have before been mentioned.

ALL languages are liable to ambiguities. Quinctilian gives us ſome inſtances in the Latin, ariſing from faulty arrangements. A man, he tells us, ordered, by his will, to have erected for him, after his death, "Statuam auream haſtam tenentem;" upon which aroſe a diſpute at Law, whether the whole ſtatue, or the ſpear only, was to be of gold?

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The ſame author obſerves, very properly, that a ſentence is always faulty, when the collocation of the words is ambiguous, though the ſenſe can be gathered. If any one ſhould ſay, "Chremetem "audivi percuſſiſſe Demeam;" this is ambiguous both in ſenſe and ſtructure, whether Chremes or Demea gave the blow. But if this expreſſion were uſed, "Se vidiſſe hominem librum ſcriben-"tem;" although the meaning be clear, yet Quinctilian inſiſts that the arrangement is wrong. "Nam," ſays he, "etiamſi librum ab homine "ſcribi pateat, non certè hominem a libro malè "tamen compoſuerat, feceratque ambiguum quan-"tum in ipſo fuit." Indeed, to have the relation of every word and member of a ſentence marked in the moſt proper and diſtinct manner, gives not clearneſs only, but grace and beauty to a ſentence, making the mind paſs ſmoothly and agreeably along all the parts of it. LECT. XI.

I PROCEED now to the ſecond quality of a well-arranged ſentence, which I termed, its Unity. This is a capital property. In every compoſition, of whatever kind, ſome degree of unity is required, in order to render it beautiful. There muſt be always ſome connecting principle among the parts. Some one object muſt reign and be predominant. This, as I ſhall hereafter ſhew, holds in Hiſtory, in Epic and Dramatic Poetry, and in all Orations. But moſt of all, in a ſingle ſentence, is required the ſtricteſt unity. For the very nature of a ſentence

LECT. XI. tence implies one propoſition to be expreſſed. It may conſiſt of parts, indeed; but theſe parts muſt be ſo cloſely bound together, as to make the impreſſion upon the mind, of one object, not of many. Now, in order to preſerve this unity of a ſentence, the following rules muſt be obſerved:

In the firſt place, during the courſe of the ſentence, the ſcene ſhould be changed as little as poſſible. We ſhould not be hurried by ſudden tranſitions from perſon to perſon, nor from ſubject to ſubject. There is commonly, in every ſentence, ſome perſon or thing, which is the governing word. This ſhould be continued ſo, if poſſible, from the beginning to the end of it. Should I expreſs myſelf thus: "After we came to anchor, they put "me on ſhore, where I was welcomed by all my "friends, who received me with the greateſt kind-"neſs." In this ſentence, though the objects contained in it have a ſufficient connection with each other, yet, by this manner of repreſenting them, by ſhifting ſo often both the place and the perſon, *we*, and *they*, and *I*, and *who*, they appear in ſuch a diſunited view, that the ſenſe of connection is almoſt loſt. The ſentence is reſtored to its proper unity, by turning it after the following manner: "Having come to an anchor, I was put on ſhore, "where I was welcomed by all my friends, and "received with the greateſt kindneſs." Writers who tranſgreſs this rule, for the moſt part tranſgreſs, at the ſame time,

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A SECOND rule; never to crowd into one ſentence, things which have ſo little connection, that they could bear to be divided into two or three ſentences. The violation of this rule never fails to hurt and diſpleaſe a reader. Its effect, indeed, is ſo bad, that of the two, it is the ſafer extreme, to err rather by too many ſhort ſentences, than by one that is overloaded and embarraſſed. Examples abound in authors. I ſhall produce ſome, to juſtify what I now ſay. "Archbiſhop Tillotſon," ſays an Author of the Hiſtory of England, "died "in this year. He was exceedingly beloved both "by King William and Queen Mary, who no-"minated Dr. Tenniſon, Biſhop of Lincoln, to "ſucceed him." Who would expect the latter part of this ſentence to follow, in conſequence of the former? "He was exceedingly beloved by "both King and Queen," is the propoſition of the ſentence: we look for ſome proof of this, or at leaſt ſomething related to it, to follow; when we are on a ſudden carried off to a new propoſition, "who nominated Dr. Tenniſon to ſucceed him." The following is from Middleton's Life of Cicero: "In this uneaſy ſtate, both of his public and "private life, Cicero was oppreſſed by a new and "cruel affliction, the death of his beloved "daughter Tullia; which happened ſoon after "her divorce from Dolabella, whoſe manners and "humours were entirely diſagreeable to her." The principal object in this ſentence is, the death of Tullia, which was the cauſe of her father's affliction;

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affliction; the date of it, as happening ſoon after her divorce from Dolabella, may enter into the ſentence with propriety; but the ſubjunction of Dolabella's character is foreign to the main object, and breaks the unity and compactneſs of the ſentence totally, by ſetting a new picture before the reader. The following ſentence, from a tranſlation of Plutarch, is ſtill worſe: "Their march," ſays the Author, ſpeaking of the Greeks under Alexander, "their march was through an uncultivated "country, whoſe ſavage inhabitants fared hardly, "having no other riches than a breed of lean "ſheep, whoſe fleſh was rank and unſavory, by "reaſon of their continual feeding upon ſea-fiſh." Here the ſcene is changed upon us again and again. The march of the Greeks, the deſcription of the inhabitants through whoſe country they travelled, the account of their ſheep, and the cauſe of their ſheep being ill-taſted food, form a jumble of objects, ſlightly related to each other, which the reader cannot, without much difficulty, comprehend under one view.

THESE examples have been taken from ſentences of no great length, yet over-crowded. Authors who deal in long ſentences, are very apt to be faulty in this article. One need only open Lord Clarendon's Hiſtory, to find examples every where. The long, involved, and intricate ſentences of that Author, are the greateſt blemiſh of his compoſition: though in other reſpects, as a Hiſtorian, he

he has conſiderable merit. In later, and more correct writers than Lord Clarendon, we find a period ſometimes running out ſo far, and comprehending ſo many particulars, as to be more properly a diſcourſe than a ſentence. Take, for an inſtance, the following from Sir William Temple, in his Eſſay upon Poetry: "The uſual acceptation takes Profit "and Pleaſure for two different things; and not "only calls the followers or votaries of them by the "ſeveral names of Buſy and Idle Men; but diſtin-"guiſhes the faculties of the mind, that are con-"verſant about them, calling the operations of "the firſt, Wiſdom; and of the other, Wit; "which is a Saxon word uſed to expreſs what the "Spaniards and Italians calls *Ingenio*, and the "French *Eſprit*, both from the Latin; though I "think Wit more particularly ſignifies that of "Poetry, as may occur in Remarks on the Runic "Language." When one arrives at the end of ſuch a puzzled ſentence, he is ſurpriſed to find himſelf got to ſo great a diſtance from the object with which he at firſt ſet out.

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Lord Shaftsbury, often betrayed into faults by his love of magnificence, ſhall afford us the next example. It is in his Rhapſody, where he is deſcribing the cold regions: "At length," ſays he, "the Sun approaching, melts the ſnow, ſets "longing men at liberty, and affords them means "and time to make proviſion againſt the next "return of cold." The firſt ſentence is correct enough;

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enough; but he goes on: "It breaks the icy "fetters of the main, where vaſt ſea-monſters "pierce through floating iſlands, with arms which "can withſtand the cryſtal rock; whilſt others, "who of themſelves ſeem great as iſlands, are by "their bulk alone armed againſt all but Man, "whoſe ſuperiority over creatures of ſuch ſtupen- "dous ſize and force, ſhould make him mindful "of his privilege of Reaſon, and force him humbly "to adore the great Compoſer of theſe wondrous "frames, and the Author of his own ſuperior "wiſdom." Nothing can be more unhappy or embarraſſed than this ſentence; the worſe too, as it is intended to be deſcriptive, where every thing ſhould be clear. It forms no diſtinct image whatever. The *It*, at the beginning, is ambiguous, whether it mean the Sun or the Cold. The object is changed three times in the ſentence; beginning with the Sun, which breaks the icy fetters of the main; then the Sea-monſters become the principal perſonages; and laſtly, by a very unexpected tranſition, Man is brought into view, and receives a long and ſerious admonition before the ſentence cloſes. I do not at preſent inſiſt on the impropriety of ſuch expreſſions as, *God's being the Compoſer of Frames;* and the Sea-monſters having *arms that withſtand rocks.* Shaftſbury's ſtrength lay in reaſoning and ſentiment, more than in deſcription; however much his deſcriptions have been ſometimes admired.

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I SHALL only give one inſtance more on this head, from Dean Swift; in his Propoſal, too, for correcting the Engliſh Language: where, in place of a Sentence, he has given a looſe diſſertation upon ſeveral ſubjects. Speaking of the progreſs of our Language, after the time of Cromwell: "To this "ſucceeded," ſays he, "that licentiouſneſs, which "entered with the Reſtoration, and, from infecting "our religion and morals, fell to corrupt our Lan- "guage; which laſt was not likely to be much "improved by thoſe, who at that time made up the "Court of King Charles the Second; either ſuch "as had followed him in his baniſhment, or who "had been altogether converſant in the dialect "of theſe fanatic times; or young men who had "been educated in the ſame country; ſo that "the Court, which uſed to be the ſtandard of "correctneſs and propriety of Speech, was then, "and I think has ever ſince continued, the worſt "ſchool in England for that accompliſhment; and "ſo will remain, till better care be taken in the "education of our nobility, that they may ſet out "into the world with ſome foundation of litera- "ture, in order to qualify them for patterns of "politeneſs." How many different facts, reaſon- ings, and obſervations are here preſented to the mind at once! and yet ſo linked together by the Author, that they all make parts of a Sentence, which admits of no greater diviſion in pointing, than a ſemicolon between any of its members? Having mentioned pointing, I ſhall here take no-

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tice, that it is in vain to propoſe, by arbitrary punctuation, to amend the defects of a Sentence, to correct its ambiguity, or to prevent its confuſion. For commas, colons, and points, do not make the proper diviſions of thought; but only ſerve to mark thoſe which ariſe from the tenor of the Author's expreſſion, and, therefore, they are proper or not, juſt according as they correſpond to the natural diviſion of the ſenſe. When they are inſerted in wrong places, they deſerve, and will meet with, no regard.

I PROCEED to a third rule, for preſerving the Unity of Sentences; which is, to keep clear of all Parentheſes in the middle of them. On ſome occaſions, they may have a ſpirited appearance; as prompted by a certain vivacity of thought, which can glance happily aſide, as it is going along. But, for the moſt part their effect is extremely bad: being a ſort of wheels within wheels; ſentences in the midſt of ſentences; the perplexed method of diſpoſing of ſome thought, which a writer wants art to introduce in its proper place. It were needleſs to give many inſtances, as they occur ſo often among incorrect writers. I ſhall produce one from Lord Bollingbroke, the rapidity of whoſe genius and manner of writing, betrays him frequently into inaccuracies of this ſort. It is in the introduction to his Idea of a Patriot King, where he writes thus: "It ſeems to me, that, in "order to maintain the ſyſtem of the world, at a

"certain

" certain point, far below that of ideal perfection, LECT. XI.
" (for we are made capable of conceiving what we
" are incapable of attaining,) but, however, ſuffi-
" cient upon the whole, to conſtitute a ſtate eaſy and
" happy, or at the worſt, tolerable; I ſay, it ſeems
" to me, that the Author of nature has thought
" fit to mingle, from time to time, among the ſo-
" cieties of men, a few, and but a few, of thoſe
" on whom he is graciouſly pleaſed to beſtow
" a larger portion of the Etherial Spirit, than is
" given in the ordinary courſe of his government,
" to the ſons of men." A very bad ſentence this; into which, by the help of a Parentheſis, and other interjected circumſtances, his Lordſhip had contrived to thruſt ſo many things that he is forced to begin the conſtruction again with the phraſe *I ſay*, which, whenever it occurs, may be always aſſumed as a ſure mark of a clumſy ill-conſtructed Sentence; excuſable in ſpeaking, where the greateſt accuracy is not expected, but in poliſhed writing, unpardonable.

I SHALL add only one rule more for the Unity of a Sentence, which is to bring it always to a full and perfect cloſe. Every thing that is one, ſhould have a beginning, a middle, and an end. I need not take notice, that an unfiniſhed Sentence is no Sentence at all, according to any grammatical rule. But very often we meet with Sentences, that are, ſo to ſpeak, more than finiſhed. When we have arrived at what we expected was to be the conclu-

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ſion, when we are come to the word on which the mind is naturally led, by what went before, to reſt; unexpectedly, ſome circumſtance pops out, which ought to have been omitted, or to have been diſpoſed of elſewhere; but which is left lagging behind, like a tail adjected to the Sentence; ſomewhat that, as Mr. Pope deſcribes the Alexandrine line,

"Like a wounded ſnake, drags its ſlow length along."

All theſe adjections to the proper cloſe, diſfigure a Sentence extremely. They give it a lame ungraceful air, and in particular, they break its Unity. Dean Swift, for inſtance, in his Letter to a Young Clergyman, ſpeaking of Cicero's writings, expreſſes himſelf thus: "With theſe "writings young divines are more converſant, "than with thoſe of Demoſthenes, who, by many "degrees, excelled the other; at leaſt, as an "orator." Here the natural cloſe of the Sentence is at theſe words, "excelled the other." Theſe words conclude the propoſition; we look for no more; and the circumſtance added, "at leaſt, as an orator," comes in with a very halting pace. How much more compact would the Sentence have been, if turned thus: "With theſe "writings young divines are more converſant, "than with thoſe of Demoſthenes, who, by many "degrees, as an orator at leaſt, excelled the "other." In the following Sentence, from Sir William Temple, the adjection of the Sentence

is

is altogether foreign to it. Speaking of Burnet's Theory of the Earth, and Fontenelle's Plurality of Worlds, "The firſt," ſays he, "could not end his "learned treatiſe, without a panegyric of modern "learning in compariſon of the ancient; and the "other falls ſo groſsly into the cenſure of the old "poetry, and preference of the new, that I could "not read either of theſe ſtrains without ſome in-"dignation; which no quality among men is ſo "apt to raiſe in me as ſelf-ſufficiency." The word "indignation" concluded the Sentence; the laſt member, "which no quality among men is ſo "apt to raiſe in me as ſelf-ſufficiency." is a propoſition altogether new, added after the proper cloſe.

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STRUCTURE OF SENTENCES.

LECT. XII. HAVING treated of Perſpicuity and Unity, as neceſſary to be ſtudied in the Structure of Sentences, I proceed to the third quality of a correct Sentence, which I term Strength. By this I mean, ſuch a diſpoſition of the ſeveral words and members, as ſhall bring out the ſenſe to the beſt advantage; as ſhall render the impreſſion which the period is deſigned to make, moſt full and complete; and give every word, and every member, their due weight and force. The two former qualities of Perſpicuity and Unity, are, no doubt, abſolutely neceſſary to the production of this effect; but more is ſtill requiſite. For a Sentence may be clear enough, it may alſo be compact enough in all its parts, or have the requiſite unity; and yet, by ſome unfavourable circumſtance in the ſtructure, it may fail in that ſtrength or livelineſs of impreſſion which a more happy arrangement would have produced.

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THE firſt rule which I ſhall give, for promoting the Strength of a Sentence, is to diveſt it of all redundant words. Theſe may, ſometimes, be conſiſtent with a conſiderable degree both of Clearneſs and Unity; but they are always enfeebling. They make the Sentence move along tardy and encumbered;

> Eſt brevitate opus, ut currat ſententia, neu ſe
> Impediat verbis, laſſas onerantibus aures *.

It is a general maxim, that any words which do not add ſome importance to the meaning of a Sentence, always ſpoil it. They cannot be ſuperfluous, without being hurtful. "Obſtat," ſays Quinctilian, "quicquid non adjuvat." All that can be eaſily ſupplied in the mind, is better left out in the expreſſion. Thus: "Content with de-"ſerving a triumph, he refuſed the honour of it," is better language than to ſay, "Being content "with deſerving a triumph, he refuſed the honour "of it." I conſider it, therefore, as one of the moſt uſeful exerciſes of correction, upon reviewing what we have written or compoſed, to contract that round-about method of expreſſion, and to lop off thoſe uſeleſs excreſcences which are commonly found in a firſt draught. Here a ſevere eye ſhould

* "Conciſe your diction, let your ſenſe be clear,
"Nor with a weight of words, fatigue the ear."
FRANCIS.

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be employed; and we ſhall always find our Sentences acquire more vigour and energy when thus retrenched; provided always, that we run not into the extreme of pruning ſo very cloſe, as to give a hardneſs and dryneſs to ſtyle. For here, as in all other things, there is a due medium. Some regard, though not the principal, muſt be had to fulneſs and ſwelling of ſound. Some leaves muſt be left to ſurround and ſhelter the fruit.

As Sentences ſhould be cleared of redundant words, ſo alſo of redundant members. As every word ought to preſent a new idea, ſo every member ought to contain a new thought. Oppoſed to this, ſtands the fault we ſometimes meet with, of the laſt member of a period being no other than the echo of the former, or the repetition of it in ſomewhat a different form. For example; ſpeaking of Beauty, "The very firſt diſcovery of "it," ſays Mr. Addiſon, "ſtrikes the mind with "inward joy, and ſpreads delight through all its "faculties." (No. 412.) And elſewhere, "It "is impoſſible for us to behold the divine works "with coldneſs or indifference, or to ſurvey ſo "many beauties, without a ſecret ſatisfaction and "complacency." (No. 413.) In both theſe inſtances, little or nothing is added by the ſecond member of the Sentence to what was already expreſſed in the firſt: And though the free and flowing manner of ſuch an Author as Mr. Addiſon, and the graceful harmony of his period, may palliate

liate ſuch negligences; yet, in general, it holds, that ſtyle, freed from this prolixity, appears both more ſtrong and more beautiful. The attention becomes remiſs, the mind falls into inaction, when words are multiplied without a correſponding multiplication of ideas. LECT. XII.

AFTER removing ſuperfluities, the ſecond direction I give, for promoting the Strength of a Sentence, is, to attend particularly to the uſe of copulatives, relatives, and all the particles employed for tranſition and connection. Theſe little words, *but*, *and*, *which*, *whoſe*, *where*, &c. are frequently the moſt important words of any; they are the joints or hinges upon which all Sentences turn, and, of courſe, much, both of their gracefulneſs and ſtrength, muſt depend upon ſuch particles. The varieties in uſing them are, indeed, ſo infinite, that no particular ſyſtem of rules reſpecting them can be given. Attention to the practice of the moſt accurate writers, joined with frequent trials of the different effects, produced by a different uſage of thoſe particles, muſt here direct us*. Some obſervations I ſhall mention, which have occurred to me as uſeful, without pretending to exhauſt the ſubject.

* On this head Dr. Lowth's Short Introduction to Engliſh Grammar deſerves to be conſulted; where ſeveral niceties of the Language are well pointed out.

WHAT

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WHAT is called ſplitting of particles, or ſeparating a prepoſition from the noun which it governs, is always to be avoided. As if I ſhould ſay, "Though virtue borrows no aſſiſtance from, yet "it may often be accompanied by, the advantages "of fortune." In ſuch inſtances we feel a ſort of pain from the revulſion, or violent ſeparation of two things, which, by their nature, ſhould be cloſely united. We are put to a ſtand in thought; being obliged to reſt for a little on the prepoſition by itſelf, which, at the ſame time, carries no ſignificancy, till it is joined to its proper ſubſtantive noun.

SOME writers needleſsly multiply demonſtrative and relative particles, by the frequent uſe of ſuch phraſeology as this: "There is nothing which "diſguſts us ſooner than the empty pomp of Lan-"guage." In introducing a ſubject, or laying down a propoſition to which we demand particular attention, this ſort of ſtyle is very proper; but in the ordinary current of diſcourſe, it is better to expreſs ourſelves more ſimply and ſhortly: "No-"thing diſguſts us ſooner than the empty pomp "of Language."

OTHER writers make a practice of omitting the Relative, in a phraſe of a different kind from the former, where they think the meaning can be underſtood without it. As, "The man I love."—"The dominions we poſſeſſed, and the conqueſts "we made." But though this elliptical ſtyle be intelli-

intelligible, and is allowable in converſation and epiſtolary writing, yet, in all writings of a ſerious or dignified kind, it is ungraceful. There, the Relative ſhould always be inſerted in its proper place, and the conſtruction filled up: "The man "whom I love."—"The dominions which we "poſſeſſed, and the conqueſts which we made."

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WITH regard to the Copulative Particle, *and*, which occurs ſo frequently in all kinds of compoſition, ſeveral obſervations are to be made. Firſt, It is evident, that the unneceſſary repetition of it enfeebles ſtyle. It has the ſame ſort of effect, as the frequent uſe of the vulgar phraſe, *and ſo*, when one is telling a ſtory in common converſation. We ſhall take a Sentence from Sir William Temple, for an inſtance. He is ſpeaking of the refinement of the French Language: "The academy ſet up "by Cardinal Richelieu, to amuſe the wits of that "age and country, and to divert them from raking "into his politics and miniſtry, brought this into "vogue; and the French wits have, for this laſt "age, been wholly turned to the refinement of "their Style and Language: and, indeed, with "ſuch ſucceſs, that it can hardly be equalled, and "runs equally through their verſe and their proſe." Here are no fewer than eight *ands* in one Sentence. This agreeable writer too often makes his Sentences drag in this manner, by a careleſs multiplication of Copulatives. It is ſtrange how a writer ſo accurate as Dean Swift ſhould have ſtumbled on

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ſo improper an application of this particle, as he has made in the following Sentence; Eſſay on the Fates of Clergymen. "There is no talent ſo uſe- "ful towards riſing in the world, or which puts "men more out of the reach of fortune, than that "quality generally poſſeſſed by the dulleſt ſort of "people, and is, in common Language, called "Diſcretion; a ſpecies of lower prudence, by the "aſſiſtance of which," &c. By the inſertion of, *and is*, in place of, *which is*, he has not only clogged the Sentence, but even made it ungrammatical.

BUT, in the next place, it is worthy of obſervation, that though the natural uſe of the conjunction, *and*, be to join objects together, and thereby, as one would think, to make their connection more cloſe; yet in fact, by dropping the conjunction, we often mark a cloſer connection, a quicker ſucceſſion of objects, than when it is inſerted between them. Longinus makes this remark; which, from many inſtances, appears to be juſt: "Veni, vidi, "vici *," expreſſes, with more ſpirit, the rapidity and quick ſucceſſion of conqueſt, than if connecting particles had been uſed. So, in the following deſcription of a rout in Cæſar's Commentaries: "Noſtri, emiſſis pilis, gladiis rem gerunt; repente "poſt tergum equitatus cernitur; cohortes aliæ

* "I came, I ſaw, I conquered."

"appro-

"appropinquant. Hoſtes terga vertunt; fugi- LECT. XII.
"entibus equites occurrunt; fit magna cædes*." Bell. Gall. l. 7.

HENCE, it follows, that when, on the other hand, we ſeek to prevent a quick tranſition from one object to another, when we are making ſome enumeration in which we wiſh that the objects ſhould appear as diſtinct from each other as poſſible, and that the mind ſhould reſt, for a moment, on each object by itſelf; in this caſe, Copulatives may be multiplied with peculiar advantage and grace. As when Lord Bolingbroke ſays, "Such "a man might fall a victim to power; but truth, "and reaſon, and liberty would fall with him." In the ſame manner Cæſar deſcribes an engagement with the Nervii: "His equitibus facile pulſis "ac proturbatis, incredibile celeritate ad flumen "decurrerunt; ut pene uno tempore, et ad ſilvas, "et in flumine, et jam in manibus noſtris, hoſtes "viderentur†." Bell. Gall. l. 2.

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* "Our men, after having diſcharged their javelins, attack "with ſword in hand: of a ſudden the cavalry make their ap-"pearance behind; other bodies of men are ſeen drawing near; "the enemies turn their backs; the horſe meet them in their "flight; a great ſlaughter enſues."

† "The enemy, having eaſily beat off, and ſcattered this "body of horſe, ran down with incredible celerity to the river; "ſo that almoſt at one moment of time, they appeared to be in "the woods, and in the river, and in the midſt of our troops."

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Here, although he is deſcribing a quick ſucceſſion of events, yet, as it is his intention to ſhew in how many places the enemy ſeemed to be at one time, the Copulative is very happily redoubled, in order to paint more ſtrongly the diſtinction of theſe ſeveral places.

THIS attention to the ſeveral caſes, when it is proper to omit, and when to redouble the Copulative, is of conſiderable importance to all who ſtudy eloquence. For it is a remarkable particularity in Language, that the omiſſion of a connecting particle ſhould ſometime ſerve to make objects appear more cloſely connected; and that the repetition of it ſhould diſtinguiſh and ſeparate them in ſome meaſure from each other. Hence, the omiſſion of it is uſed to denote rapidity; and the repetition of it is deſigned to retard, and to aggravate. The reaſon ſeems to be, that, in the former caſe, the mind is ſuppoſed to be hurried ſo faſt through a quick ſucceſſion of objects, that it has not leiſure to point out their connection; it drops the Copulatives in its hurry; and crowds the whole ſeries together as if it were but one object. Whereas, when we enumerate, with a view to aggravate, the mind is ſuppoſed to proceed with a more ſlow and ſolemn pace; it marks fully the relation of each object to that which ſucceeds it; and, by joining them together with ſeveral Copulatives, makes you perceive, that the objects, though connected, are yet, in themſelves, diſtinct;

distinct; that they are many, not one. Observe, for instance, in the following enumeration, made by the Apostle Paul, what additional weight and distinctness is given to each particular by the repetition of a conjunction. "I am persuaded that "neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor princi- "palities, nor powers, nor things present, nor "things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any "other creature, shall be able to separate us from "the love of God." Rom. viii. 38, 39. So much with regard to the use of Copulatives. LECT. XII.

I PROCEED to a third rule for promoting the Strengh of a Sentence, which is to dispose of the capital word, or words, in that place of the Sentence where they will make the fullest impression. That such capital words there are in every Sentence, on which the meaning principally rests, every one must see; and that these words should possess a conspicuous and distinguished place, is equally plain. Indeed, that place of the Sentence where they will make the best figure, whether the beginning or the end, or sometimes, even the middle, cannot, as far as I know, be ascertained by any precise rule. This must vary with the nature of the Sentence. Perspicuity must ever be studied in the first place; and the nature of our Language allows no great liberty in the choice of collocation. For the most part, with us, the important words are placed in the beginning of the Sentence. So Mr. Addison; "The pleasures of

LECT. XII. "the imagination, taken in their full extent, are "not ſo groſs as thoſe of ſenſe, ſo refined as thoſe "of the underſtanding." And this, indeed, ſeems the moſt plain and natural order, to place that in the front, which is the chief object of the propoſition we are laying down. Sometimes, however, when we intend to give weight to a Sentence, it is of advantage to ſuſpend the meaning for a little, and then bring it out full at the cloſe: "Thus," ſays Mr. Pope, "on whatever ſide we contemplate "Homer, what principally ſtrikes us, is his wonder-"ful invention." (Pref. to Homer.)

THE Greek and Latin writers had a conſiderable advantage above us, in this part of ſtyle. By the great liberty of inverſion which their Languages permitted, they could chuſe the moſt advantageous ſituation for every word; and had it thereby in their power to give their Sentences more force. Milton, in his proſe works, and ſome other of our old Engliſh writers, endeavour to imitate them in this. But the forced conſtructions which they employed, produced obſcurity; and the genius of our Language, as it is now written and ſpoken, will not admit ſuch liberties. Mr. Gordon, who followed this inverted ſtyle in his Tranſlation of Tacitus, has, ſometimes, done ſuch violence to the Language as even to appear ridiculous; as in this expreſſion: "Into this hole thruſt them-"ſelves, three Roman ſenators." He has tranſlated ſo ſimple a phraſe as, "Nullum eâ tempeſtate "bellum,"

"bellum," by, "War at that time there was "none." However, within certain bounds, and to a limited degree our Language does admit of inverſions; and they are practiſed with ſucceſs by the beſt writers. So Mr. Pope, ſpeaking of Homer, "The praiſe of judgment Virgil has "juſtly conteſted with him, but his invention "remains yet unrivalled." It is evident, that, in order to give the Sentence its due force, by contraſting properly the two capital words, "judgment "and invention," this is a happier arrangement than if he had followed the natural order, which was, "Virgil has juſtly conteſted with him the "praiſe of judgment, but his invention remains yet "unrivalled." LECT. XII.

Some writers practiſe this degree of inverſion, which our Language bears, much more than others; Lord Shaftſbury, for inſtance, much more than Mr. Addiſon; and to this ſort of arrangement is owing, in a great meaſure, that appearance of ſtrength, dignity and varied harmony, which Lord Shaftſbury's ſtyle poſſeſſes. This will appear from the following Sentences of his Enquiry into Virtue; where all the words are placed, not ſtrictly in the natural order, but with that artificial conſtruction, which may give the period moſt emphaſis and grace. He is ſpeaking of the miſery of vice: "This, as to the complete immoral ſtate, is, "what of their own accord men readily remark. "Where there is this abſolute degeneracy, this

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" total apoſtacy from all candor, truſt, or equity, " there are few who do not ſee and acknowledge " the miſery which is conſequent. Seldom is the " caſe miſconſtrued when at worſt. The misfor- " tune is, that we look not on this depravity, nor " conſider how it ſtands, in leſs degrees. As if, " to be abſolutely immoral, were, indeed, the " greateſt miſery; but, to be ſo in a little degree, " ſhould be no miſery or harm at all. Which to " allow, is juſt as reaſonable as to own, that 'tis " the greateſt ill of a body to be in the utmoſt " manner maimed or diſtorted; but that, to loſe " the uſe only of one limb, or to be impaired in " ſome ſingle organ or member, is no ill worthy " the leaſt notice." (Vol. ii. p. 82.) Here is no violence done to the Language, though there are many inverſions. All is ſtately, and arranged with art; which is the great characteriſtic of this author's Style.

We need only open any page of Mr. Addiſon, to ſee quite a different order in the conſtruction of Sentences. " Our ſight is the moſt perfect, and " moſt delightful of all our ſenſes. It fills the " mind with the largeſt variety of ideas, converſes " with its objects at the greateſt diſtance, and " continues the longeſt in action, without being " tired, or ſatiated with its proper enjoyments. " The ſenſe of feeling can, indeed, give us a " notion of extenſion, ſhape, and all other ideas " that enter at the eye, except colours; but, at " the

"the ſame time, it is very much ſtraitened and con-
"fined in its operations," &c. (Spectator, N° 411.)
In this ſtrain he always proceeds, following the moſt natural and obvious order of the Language; and if, by this means, he has leſs pomp and majeſty, than Shaftſbury, he has, in return, more nature, more eaſe and ſimplicity; which are beauties of a higher order.

BUT whether we practiſe inverſion or not, and in whatever part of the Sentence we diſpoſe of the capital words, it is always a point of great moment, that theſe capital words ſhall ſtand clear and diſentangled from any other words that would clog them. Thus, when there are any circumſtances of time, place, or other limitations, which the principal object of our Sentence requires to have connected with it, we muſt take eſpecial care to diſpoſe of them, ſo as not to cloud that principal object, nor to bury it under a load of circumſtances. This will be made clearer by an example. Obſerve the arrangement of the following Sentence, in Lord Shaftſbury's Advice to an Author. He is ſpeaking of modern poets, as compared with the antient: "If, whilſt they profeſs only to pleaſe, "they ſecretly adviſe, and give inſtruction, they "may now, perhaps, as well as formerly, be "eſteemed, with juſtice, the beſt and moſt ho-"nourable among authors." This is a well conſtructed Sentence. It contains a great many circumſtances and adverbs, neceſſary to qualify the

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meaning; *only*, *ſecretly*, *as well*, *perhaps*, *now*, *with juſtice*, *formerly*; yet theſe are placed with ſo much art as neither to embarraſs nor weaken the Sentence; while that which is the capital object in it, viz. "Poets being juſtly eſteemed "the beſt and moſt honourable among authors," comes out in the concluſion clear and detached, and poſſeſſes its proper place. See, now, what would have been the effect of a different arrangement. Suppoſe him to have placed the members of the Sentence thus: "If, whilſt they profeſs to "pleaſe only, they adviſe and give inſtruction "ſecretly, they may be eſteemed the beſt and "moſt honourable among authors, with juſtice, "perhaps, now, as well as formerly." Here we have preciſely the ſame words and the ſame ſenſe; but, by means of the circumſtances being ſo intermingled as to clog the capital words, the whole becomes perplexed, without grace, and without ſtrength.

A FOURTH rule for conſtructing Sentences with proper ſtrength, is, to make the members of them go on riſing and growing in their importance above one another. This ſort of arrangement is called a Climax, and is always conſidered as a beauty in compoſition. From what cauſe it pleaſes, is abundantly evident. In all things, we naturally love to aſcend to what is more and more beautiful, rather than to follow the retrograde order. Having had once ſome conſiderable object ſet before us, it is,

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is, with pain, we are pulled back to attend to an inferior circumſtance. "Cavendum eſt," ſays Quinctilian, whoſe authority I always willingly quote, "ne decreſcat oratio, & fortiori ſubjun-"gatur aliquid infirmius; ſicut, ſacrilegio, fur; "aut latroni petulans. Augeri enim debent ſen-"tentiæ & inſurgere *." Of this beauty, in the conſtruction of Sentences, the orations of Cicero furniſh many examples. His pompous manner naturally led him to ſtudy it; and, generally in order to render the climax perfect, he makes both the ſenſe and the ſound riſe together, with a very magnificent ſwell. So in his oration for Milo, ſpeaking of a deſign of Clodius's for aſſaſſinating Pompey: "Atqui ſi res, ſi vir, ſi tempus ullum "dignum fuit, certè hæc in illâ cauſâ ſumma "omnia fuerunt. Inſidiator erat in Foro collo-"catus, atque in Veſtibulo ipſo Senatûs; ei viro "autem mors parabatur, cujus in vitâ nitebatur "ſalus civitatis; eo porrò reipublicæ tempore, "quo ſi unus ille occidiſſet, non hæc ſolùm civi-"tas, ſed gentes omnes concidiſſent." The following inſtance, from Lord Bolingbroke, is alſo beautiful: "This decency, this grace, this pro-"priety of manners to character, is ſo eſſential to

* "Care muſt be taken that our compoſition ſhall not fall "off, and that a weaker expreſſion ſhall not follow one of more "ſtrength; as if, after ſacrilege, we ſhould bring in theft; or, "having mentioned a robbery, we ſhould ſubjoin petulance. "Sentences ought always to riſe and grow."

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" princes in particular, that, whenever it is neglected, their virtues loſe a great degree of luſtre, " and their defects acquire much aggravation. Nay " more; by neglecting this decency and this grace, " and for want of a ſufficient regard to appearances, " even their virtues may betray them into failings, " their failings into vices, and their vices into habits " unworthy of princes, and unworthy of men." (Idea of a Patriot King.)

I MUST obſerve, however, that this ſort of full and oratorial climax, can neither be always obtained, nor ought to be always ſought after. Only ſome kinds of writing admit ſuch Sentences; and to ſtudy them too frequently, eſpecially if the ſubject require not ſo much pomp, is affected and diſagreeable. But there is ſomething approaching to a climax, which it is a general rule to ſtudy, " ne decreſcat oratio," as Quinctilian ſpeaks, " et " ne fortiori ſubjungatur aliquid infirmius." A weaker aſſertion or propoſition ſhould never come after a ſtronger one, and when our Sentence conſiſts of two members, the longeſt ſhould, generally, be the concluding one. There is a two-fold reaſon for this laſt direction. Periods thus divided, are pronounced more eaſily; and the ſhorteſt member being placed firſt, we carry it more readily in our memory as we proceed to the ſecond, and ſee the connection of the two more clearly. Thus, to ſay, " When our paſſions have forſaken " us, we flatter ourſelves with the belief that we

" have

" have forſaken them," is both more graceful and more clear, than to begin with the longeſt part of the propoſition: " We flatter ourſelves with " the belief that we have forſaken our paſſions, " when they have forſaken us." In general, it is always agreeable to find a Sentence riſing upon us, and growing in its importance to the very laſt word, when this conſtruction can be managed without affectation, or unſeaſonable pomp. " If " we riſe yet higher," ſays Mr. Addiſon, very beautifully, " and conſider the fixed ſtars as ſo " many oceans of flame, that are each of them " attended with a different ſet of planets; and ſtill " diſcover new firmaments and new lights, that are " ſunk farther in thoſe unfathomable depths of " æther; we are loſt in ſuch a labyrinth of ſuns and " worlds, and confounded with the magnificence " and immenſity of Nature." (Spect. No. 420.) Hence follows clearly, LECT. XII.

A FIFTH rule for the ſtrength of Sentences; which is, to avoid concluding them with an adverb, a prepoſition, or any inconſiderable word. Such concluſions are always enfeebling and degrading. There are Sentences, indeed, where the ſtreſs and ſignificancy reſt chiefly upon ſome words of this kind. In this caſe they are not to be conſidered as circumſtances, but as the capital figures; and ought, in propriety, to have the principal place allotted them. No fault, for inſtance, can be found with this ſentence of Bolingbroke's; " In

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"their proſperity my friends ſhall never hear of "me; in their adverſity, always." Where *never*, and *always*, being emphatical words, were to be ſo placed, as to make a ſtrong impreſſion. But I ſpeak now of thoſe inferior parts of ſpeech, when introduced as circumſtances, or as qualifications of more important words. In ſuch caſe they ſhould always be diſpoſed of in the leaſt conſpicuous parts of the Period; and ſo claſſed with other words of greater dignity, as to be kept in their proper ſecondary ſtation.

AGREEABLY to this rule, we ſhould always avoid concluding with any of thoſe particles which mark the caſes of nouns, — *of*, *to*, *from*, *with*, *by*. For inſtance, it is a great deal better to ſay, "Avarice is a crime of which wiſe men are "often guilty," than to ſay, "Avarice is a crime "which wiſe men are often guilty of." This is a phraſeology which all correct writers ſhun; and with reaſon. For, beſides the want of dignity which ariſes from thoſe monoſyllables at the end, the imagination cannot avoid reſting, for a little, on the import of the word which cloſes the ſentence: And, as thoſe prepoſitions have no import of their own, but only ſerve to point out the relations of other words, it is diſagreeable for the mind to be left pauſing on a word, which does not, by itſelf, produce any idea, nor form any picture in the fancy.

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For the ſame reaſon, verbs which are uſed in a compound ſenſe, with ſome of theſe prepoſitions, are, though not ſo bad, yet ſtill not ſo beautiful concluſions of a period; ſuch as, *bring about*, *lay hold of*, *come over to*, *clear up*, and many other of this kind; inſtead of which, if we can employ a ſimple verb, it always terminates the ſentence with more ſtrength. Even the pronoun, *it*, though it has the import of a ſubſtantive noun, and indeed often forces itſelf upon us unavoidably, yet, when we want to give dignity to a Sentence, ſhould, if poſſible, be avoided in the concluſion; more eſpecially when it is joined with ſome of the prepoſitions, as, *with it*, *in it*, *to it*. In the following Sentence of the Spectator, which otherwiſe is abundantly noble, the bad effect of this cloſe is ſenſible: "There is not, in my opinion, a more "pleaſing and triumphant conſideration in religion, "than this, of the perpetual progreſs which the "ſoul makes towards the perfection of its nature, "without ever arriving at a period in it." (No. 111.) How much more graceful the Sentence, if it had been ſo conſtructed as to cloſe with the word, *period*.

Besides particles and pronouns, any phraſe, which expreſſes a circumſtance only, always brings up the rear of a ſentence with a bad grace. We may judge of this, by the following Sentence from Lord Bolingbroke (Letter on the State of Parties at the Acceſſion of King George I.): "Let me

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" therefore conclude by repeating, that diviſion " has cauſed all the miſchief we lament; that union " alone can retrieve it; and that a great advance " towards this union was the coalition of parties, ſo " happily begun, ſo ſucceſsfully carried on, and of " late ſo unaccountably neglected; to ſay no worſe." This laſt phraſe, *to ſay no worſe*, occaſions a ſad falling off at the end; ſo much the more unhappy, as the reſt of the Period is conducted after the manner of a climax, which we expect to find growing to the laſt.

THE proper diſpoſition of ſuch circumſtances in a Sentence, is often attended with conſiderable trouble, in order to adjuſt them ſo, as ſhall conſiſt equally with the perſpicuity and the grace of the Period. Though neceſſary parts, they are, however, like unſhapely ſtones in a building, which try the ſkill of an artiſt, where to place them with the leaſt offence. " Jungantur," ſays Quinctilian, " quo " congruunt maximè; ſicut in ſtructurâ ſaxorum " rudium, etiam ipſa enormitas invenit cui applicari, " et in quo poſſit inſiſtere *."

THE cloſe is always an unſuitable place for them. When the ſenſe admits it, the ſooner they are diſ-

* " Let them be inſerted wherever the happieſt place for them " can be found; as, in a ſtructure compoſed of rough ſtones, " there are always places where the moſt irregular and unſhapely " may find ſome adjacent one to which it can be joined, and ſome " baſis on which it may reſt."

patched,

patched, generally ſpeaking, the better; that the more important and ſignificant words may poſſeſs the laſt place, quite diſencumbered. It is a rule too, never to crowd too many circumſtances together, but rather to interſperſe them in different parts of the Sentence, joined with the capital words on which they depend; provided that care be taken, as I before directed, not to clog thoſe capital words with them. For inſtance, when Dean Swift ſays, "What I had the honour of "mentioning to your Lordſhip, ſome time ago, "in converſation, was not a new thought." (Letter to the Earl of Oxford.) Theſe two circumſtances, *ſome time ago*, and *in converſation*, which are here put together, would have had a better effect disjoined thus: "What I had the honour, ſometime ago, of "mentioning to your Lordſhip in converſation." And in the following Sentence of Lord Bolingbroke's (Remarks on the Hiſtory of England): "A monarchy, limited like ours, may be placed, "for aught I know, as it has been often repre-"ſented, juſt in the middle point, from whence a "deviation leads, on the one hand, to tyranny, and "on the other to anarchy." The arrangement would have been happier thus: "A monarchy, "limited like ours, may, for aught I know, be "placed, as it has often been repreſented, juſt in "the middle point," &c. LECT. XII.

I SHALL give only one rule more, relating to the ſtrength of a Sentence; which is, that in the members

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members of a Sentence where two things are compared or contraſted to each other; where either a reſemblance or an oppoſition is intended to be expreſſed; ſome reſemblance, in the language and conſtruction, ſhould be preſerved. For when the things themſelves correſpond to each other, we naturally expect to find the words correſponding too. We are diſappointed when it is otherwiſe; and the compariſon, or contraſt, appears more imperfect. Thus, when Lord Bolingbroke ſays, "The laughers will be for thoſe who have moſt "wit; the ſerious part of mankind for thoſe who "have moſt reaſon on their ſide;" (Differt. on Parties, Pref.) the oppoſition would have been more complete, if he had ſaid; "The laughers "will be for thoſe who have moſt wit; the ſerious, "for thoſe who have moſt reaſon on their ſide." The following paſſage from Mr. Pope's Preface to his Homer, fully exemplifies the rule I am now giving: "Homer was the greater genius; Virgil "the better artiſt; in the one, we moſt admire the "man; in the other, the work. Homer hurries us "with a commanding impetuoſity; Virgil leads "us with an attractive majeſty. Homer ſcatters "with a generous profuſion; Virgil beſtows with "a careful magnificence. Homer, like the Nile, "pours out his riches with a ſudden overflow; "Virgil, like a river in its banks, with a conſtant "ſtream.——And when we look upon their "machines, Homer ſeems like his own Jupiter "in his terrors, ſhaking Olympus, ſcattering the "lightnings,

"lightnings, and firing the heavens; Virgil, like "the ſame Power in his benevolence, counſelling "with the gods, laying plans for empires, and "ordering his whole creation."—Periods thus conſtructed, when introduced with propriety, and not returning too often, have a ſenſible beauty. But we muſt beware of carrying our attention to this beauty too far. It ought only to be occaſionally ſtudied, when compariſon or oppoſition of objects naturally leads to it. If ſuch a conſtruction as this be aimed at in all our Sentences, it leads to a diſagreeable uniformity; produces a regularly returning clink in the period, which tires the ear; and plainly diſcovers affectation. Among the antients, the ſtyle of Iſocrates is faulty in this reſpect; and, on that account, by ſome of their beſt critics, particularly by Dionyſius of Halicarnaſſus, he is ſeverely cenſured.

THIS finiſhes what I had to ſay concerning Sentences, conſidered, with reſpect to their meaning, under the three heads of Perſpicuity, Unity, and Strength. It is a ſubject on which I have inſiſted fully, for two reaſons: Firſt, becauſe it is a ſubject, which, by its nature, can be rendered more didactic, and ſubjected more to preciſe rule, than many other ſubjects of criticiſm; and next, becauſe it appears to me of conſiderable importance and uſe.

FOR, though many of thoſe attentions, which I have been recommending, may appear minute, yet

LECT. XII. yet their effect, upon Writing and Style, is much greater than might, at firſt, be imagined. A ſentiment which is expreſſed in a Period, clearly, neatly, and happily arranged, makes always a ſtronger impreſſion on the mind, than one that is feeble or embarraſſed. Every one feels this upon a compariſon; and if the effect be ſenſible in one Sentence, how much more in a whole diſcourſe, or compoſition, that is made up of ſuch Sentences.

THE fundamental rule of the conſtruction of Sentences, and into which all others might be reſolved, undoubtedly is, to communicate, in the cleareſt and moſt natural order, the ideas which we mean to transfuſe into the minds of others. Every arrangement that does moſt juſtice to the ſenſe, and expreſſes it to moſt advantage, ſtrikes us as beautiful. To this point have tended all the rules I have given. And, indeed, did men always think clearly, and were they, at the ſame time, fully maſters of the Language in which they write, there would be occaſion for few rules. Their Sentences would then, of courſe, acquire all thoſe properties of Preciſion, Unity, and Strength, which I have recommended. For we may reſt aſſured, that, whenever we expreſs ourſelves ill, there is, beſides the miſmanagement of Language, for the moſt part, ſome miſtake in our manner of conceiving the ſubject. Embarraſſed, obſcure, and feeble Sentences, are generally, if not always, the reſult of embarraſſed, obſcure, and feeble thought.

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Thought and Language act and re-act upon each other mutually. Logic and Rhetoric have here, as in many other cases, a strict connection; and he that is learning to arrange his Sentences with accuracy and order, is learning, at the same time, to think with accuracy and order; an observation which alone will justify all the care and attention we have bestowed on this subject.

LECTURE XIII.

STRUCTURE OF SENTENCES. HARMONY.

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HITHERTO we have conſidered Sentences, with reſpect to their meaning, under the heads of Perſpicuity, Unity, and Strength. We are now to conſider them, with reſpect to their ſound, their harmony, or agreeableneſs to the ear; which was the laſt quality belonging to them that I propoſed to treat of.

SOUND is a quality much inferior to ſenſe; yet ſuch as muſt not be diſregarded. For, as long as ſounds are the vehicle of conveyance for our ideas, there will be always a very conſiderable connection between the idea which is conveyed, and the nature of the ſound which conveys it. Pleaſing ideas can hardly be tranſmitted to the mind, by means of harſh and diſagreeable ſounds. The imagination revolts as ſoon as it hears them uttered. "Nihil," ſays Quinctilian, "poteſt intrare in affectum quod

"in

" in aure, velut quodam veſtibulo ſtatim offendit*." LECT. XIII.
Muſic has naturally a great power over all men to prompt and facilitate certain emotions: inſomuch, that there are hardly any diſpoſitions which we wiſh to raiſe in others, but certain ſounds may be found concordant to thoſe diſpoſitions, and tending to promote them. Now, Language may, in ſome degree, be rendered capable of this power of muſic; a circumſtance which muſt needs heighten our idea of Language as a wonderful invention. Not content with ſimply interpreting our ideas to others, it can give them thoſe ideas enforced by correſponding ſounds; and to the pleaſure of communicated thought, can add the new and ſeparate pleaſure of melody.

In the Harmony of Periods, two things may be conſidered. Firſt, agreeable ſound, or modulation in general, without any particular expreſſion: Next, the ſound ſo ordered, as to become expreſſive of the ſenſe. The firſt is the more common; the ſecond, the higher beauty.

First, Let us conſider agreeable ſound, in general, as the property of a well-conſtructed Sentence: and, as it was of proſe ſentences we have hitherto treated, we ſhall confine ourſelves to them under this head. This beauty of muſical conſtruc-

* "Nothing can enter into the affections, which ſtumbles at the threſhold, by offending the ear."

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I BEGIN with the choice of words; on which head, there is not much to be faid, unleſs I were to deſcend into a tedious and frivolous detail concerning the powers of the ſeveral letters, or ſimple ſounds, of which ſpeech is compoſed. It is evident that words are moſt agreeable to the ear which are compoſed of ſmooth and liquid ſounds, where there is a proper intermixture of vowels and conſonants; without too many harſh conſonants rubbing againſt each other; or too many open vowels in ſucceſſion, to cauſe a hiatus or diſagreeable aperture of the mouth. It may always be aſſumed as a principle, that, whatever ſounds are difficult in pronunciation, are, in the ſame proportion harſh and painful to the ear. Vowels give ſoftneſs; conſonants, ſtrength to the ſound of words. The muſic of Language requires a juſt proportion of both; and will be hurt, will be rendered either grating or effeminate, by an exceſs of either. Long words are commonly more agreeable to the ear than monoſyllables. They pleaſe it by the compoſition, or ſucceſſion of ſounds which they preſent to it; and accordingly, the moſt muſical Languages abound moſt in them. Among words of any length, thoſe are the moſt muſical, which do not run wholly either upon long or ſhort ſyllables, but are compoſed of an intermixture of them; ſuch

as *repent, produce, velocity, celerity, independent, impetuoſity.* LECT. XIII.

THE next head, reſpecting the Harmony which reſults from a proper arrangement of the words and members of a Period, is more complex, and of greater nicety. For let the words themſelves be ever ſo well choſen, and well ſounding, yet, if they be ill diſpoſed, the muſic of the Sentence is utterly loſt. In the harmonious ſtructure and diſpoſition of Periods, no writer whatever, antient or modern, equals Cicero. He had ſtudied this with care; and was fond, perhaps to exceſs, of what he calls, the "Plena ac numeroſa oratio." We need only open his writings, to find inſtances that will render the effect of muſical Language ſenſible to every ear. What, for example, can be more full, round, and ſwelling, than the following Sentence of the 4th Oration againſt Catiline? "Cogitate "quantis laboribus fundatum imperium, quantâ "virtute ſtabilitam libertatem, quantâ Deorum "benignitate auctas exaggerataſque fortunas, una "nox pene delerit." In Engliſh, we may take, for an inſtance of a muſical Sentence, the following from Milton, in his treatiſe on Education: "We "ſhall conduct you to a hill-ſide, laborious, in-"deed, at the firſt aſcent; but elſe, ſo ſmooth, "ſo green, ſo full of goodly proſpects, and melo-"dious ſounds on every ſide, that the harp of "Orpheus was not more charming." Every thing in this Sentence conſpires to promote the harmony.

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THE ſtructure of Periods, then, being ſuſceptible of a very ſenſible melody, our next inquiry ſhould be, How this melodious ſtructure is formed, what are the principles of it, and by what laws is it regulated? And, upon this ſubject, were I to follow the ancient rhetoricians, it would be eaſy to give a great variety of rules. For here they have entered into a very minute and particular detail, more particular, indeed, than on any other head that regards Language. They hold, that to proſe, as well as to verſe, there belong certain numbers, leſs ſtrict indeed, yet ſuch as can be aſcertained by rule. They go ſo far as to ſpecify the feet, as they are called, that is, the ſucceſſion of long and ſhort ſyllables, which ſhould enter into the different members of a Sentence, and to ſhew what the effect of each of theſe will be. Wherever they treat of the Structure of Sentences, it is always the

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muſic of them that makes the principal object. Cicero and Quinctilian are full of this. The other qualities of Preciſion, Unity, and Strength, which we conſider as of great importance, they handle ſlightly; but when they come to the "*junctura et* "*numerus*," the modulation and harmony, there they are copious. Dionyſius of Halicarnaſſus, one of the moſt judicious critics of antiquity, has written a treatiſe on the *Compoſition of Words in a Sentence*, which is altogether confined to their muſical effect. He makes the excellency of a Sentence to conſiſt in four things: firſt, in the ſweetneſs of ſingle ſounds; ſecondly, in the compoſition of ſounds; that is, the numbers, or feet; thirdly, in change or variety of ſound; and, fourthly, in ſound ſuited to the ſenſe. On all theſe points he writes with great accuracy and refinement; and is very worthy of being conſulted; though, were one now to write a book on the Structure of Sentences, we ſhould expect to find the ſubject treated of in a more extenſive manner.

In modern times, this whole ſubject of the muſical ſtructure of diſcourſe, it is plain, has been much leſs ſtudied: and, indeed, for ſeveral reaſons, can be much leſs ſubjected to rule. The reaſons it will be neceſſary to give, both to juſtify my not following the tract of the ancient rhetoricians on this ſubject, and to ſhew how it has come to paſs, that a part of compoſition, which once made ſo conſpicuous a figure, now draws much leſs attention.

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In the firſt place, the ancient Languages, I mean the Greek and the Roman, were much more ſuſceptible than ours, of the graces and the powers of melody. The quantities of their ſyllables were more fixed and determined; their words were longer and more ſonorous; their method of varying the terminations of nouns and verbs, both introduced a greater variety of liquid ſounds, and freed them from that multiplicity of little auxiliary words which we are obliged to employ; and, what is of the greateſt conſequence, the inverſions which their Languages allowed, gave them the power of placing their words in whatever order was moſt ſuited to a muſical arrangement. All theſe were great advantages which they enjoyed above us, for Harmony of Period.

In the next place, the Greeks and Romans, the former eſpecially, were, in truth, much more muſical nations than we; their genius was more turned to delight in the melody of ſpeech. Muſic is known to have been a more extenſive art among them than it is with us; more generally ſtudied, and applied to a greater variety of objects. Several learned men, particularly the Abbé du Bos, in his Reflections on Poetry and Painting, have clearly proved, that the theatrical compoſitions of the ancients, both their tragedies and comedies, were ſet to a kind of muſic. Whence, the *Modos fecit*, and the *Tibiis dextris et ſiniſtris*, prefixed to the editions of Terence's Plays. All ſort of declamation

mation and public ſpeaking was carried on by them in a much more muſical tone than it is among us. It approached to a kind of chanting or recitative. Among the Athenians, there was what was called the Nomic Melody; or a particular meaſure preſcribed to the public officers, in which they were to promulgate the laws to the people; leſt, by reading them with improper tones, the laws might be expoſed to contempt. Among the Romans there is a noted ſtory of C. Gracchus, when he was declaiming in public, having a muſician ſtanding at his back, in order to give him the proper tones with a pipe or flute. Even when pronouncing thoſe terrible tribunitial harangues, by which he inflamed the one half of the citizens of Rome againſt the other, this attention to the muſic of Speech, was, in thoſe times, it ſeems, thought neceſſary to ſucceſs. Quinctilian, though he condemns the exceſs of this ſort of pronunciation, yet allows a "cantus obſcurior" to be a beauty in a public ſpeaker. Hence that variety of accents, acute, grave, and circumflex, which we find marked upon the Greek ſyllables, to expreſs, not the quantity of them, but the tone in which they were to be ſpoken; the application of which is now wholly unknown to us. And though the Romans did not mark thoſe accents in their writing, yet it appears, from Quinctilian, that they uſed them in pronunciation: "*Quantum quale,*" ſays he, "comparantes gravi, interrogantes acuto "tenore concludunt." As muſic, then, was an

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object much more attended to in Speech, among the Greeks and Romans, than it is with us; as, in all kinds of public ſpeaking, they employed a much greater variety of notes, of tones, or inflections of voice, than we uſe; this is one clear reaſon of their paying a great attention to that conſtruction of Sentences, which might beſt ſuit this muſical pronunciation.

It is further known, that, in conſequence of the genius of their Languages, and of their manner of pronouncing them, the muſical arrangement of Sentences did, in fact, produce a greater effect in public ſpeaking among them, than it could poſſibly do in any modern oration; another reaſon why it deſerved to be more ſtudied. Cicero, in his treatiſe intitled, *Orator*, tells us, "Conciones "ſæpe exclamare vidi, cum verba aptè cecidiſſent. "Id enim expectant aures *." And he gives a remarkable inſtance of the effect of an harmonious period upon a whole aſſembly, from a Sentence of one of Carbo's Orations, ſpoken in his hearing. The Sentence was; "Patris dictum ſapiens teme-"ritas filii comprobravit." By means of the ſound of which, alone, he tells us, "Tantus clamor con-"cionis excitatus eſt, ut prorſus admirabile eſſet." He makes us remark the feet of which theſe words

* "I have often been witneſs to burſts of exclamation in "the public aſſemblies, when Sentences cloſed muſically; for "that is a pleaſure which the ear expects."

conſiſt,

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conſiſt, to which he aſcribes the power of the melody; and ſhews how, by altering the collocation, the whole effect would be loſt; as thus: "Patris dictum ſapiens comprobravit temeritas "filii." Now, though it be true that Carbo's Sentence is extremely muſical, and would be agreeable at this day, to an audience, yet I cannot believe that an Engliſh Sentence, equally harmonious, would by its harmony alone, produce any ſuch effect on a Britiſh audience, or excite any ſuch wonderful applauſe and admiration, as Cicero informs us this of Carbo produced. Our northern ears are too coarſe and obtuſe. The melody of Speech has leſs power over us; and by our ſimpler and plainer method of uttering words, Speech is, in truth, accompanied with leſs melody than it was among the Greeks and Romans *.

For theſe reaſons, I am of opinion, that it is vain to think of beſtowing the ſame attention upon the harmonious ſtructure of our Sentences, that was beſtowed by theſe ancient nations. The doctrine of the Greek and Roman Critics, on this head, has miſled ſome to imagine, that it might be equally

* "In verſu quidem, theatra tota exclamant ſi fuit una "ſyllaba aut brevior aut longior. Nec vero multitudo pedes "novit, nec ullos numeros tenet; nec illud quod offendit, aut "cur, aut in quo offendat, intelligit; et tamen omnium longi-"tudinum et brevitatum in ſonis, ſicut acutarum, graviumque "vocum, judicium ipſa natura in auribus noſtris collocavit."

CICERO. Orator. c. 51.

applied

LECT. XIII. applied to our Tongue; and that our profe writing might be regulated by Spondees and Trochees, and Iambus's and Pæons, and other metrical feet. But, firſt, our words cannot be meaſured, or, at leaſt, can be meaſured very imperfectly by any feet of this kind. For, the quantity, the length and ſhortneſs of our ſyllables, is far from being ſo fixed and ſubjected to rule, as in the Greek and Roman Tongues; but very often left arbitrary, and determined by the emphaſis, and the ſenſe. Next, though our proſe could admit of ſuch metrical regulation, yet from our plainer method of pronouncing all ſort of diſcourſe, the effect would not be at all ſo ſenſible to the ear, nor be reliſhed with ſo much pleaſure, as among the Greeks and Romans: And, laſtly, this whole doctrine about the meaſures and numbers of proſe, even as it is delivered by the ancient rhetoricians themſelves, is, in truth, in a great meaſure looſe and uncertain. It appears, indeed, that the melody of diſcourſe was a matter of infinitely more attention to them, than ever it has been to the moderns. But though they write a great deal about it, they have never been able to reduce it to any rules which could be of real uſe in practice. If we conſult Cicero's *Orator*, where this point is diſcuſſed with the moſt minuteneſs, we ſhall ſee how much theſe ancient critics differed from one another, about the feet proper for the concluſion, and other parts of a Sentence; and how much, after all, was left to the judgment of the ear. Nor, indeed, is it poſſible to give preciſe

cife rules concerning this matter, in any Language; as all profe compoſition muſt be allowed to run looſe in its numbers; and, according as the tenor of a diſcourſe varies, the modulation of Sentences muſt vary infinitely. LECT. XIII.

BUT, although I apprehend, that this muſical arrangement cannot be reduced into a ſyſtem, I am far from thinking, that it is a quality to be neglected in compoſition. On the contrary, I hold its effect to be very conſiderable; and that every one who ſtudies to write with grace, much more who ſeeks to pronounce in public with ſucceſs, will be obliged to attend to it not a little. But it is his ear, cultivated by attention and practice, that muſt chiefly direct him. For any rules that can be given, on this ſubject, are very general. Some rules, however, there are, which may be of uſe to form the ear to the proper harmony of diſcourſe. I proceed to mention ſuch as appear to me moſt material.

THERE are two things on which the muſic of a Sentence chiefly depends. Theſe are, the proper diſtribution of the ſeveral members of it; and, the cloſe or cadence of the whole.

FIRST, I ſay, the diſtribution of the ſeveral members is to be carefully attended to. It is of importance to obſerve, that, whatever is eaſy and agreeable to the organs of Speech, always ſounds grateful

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grateful to the ear. While a period is going on, the termination of each of its members forms a pauſe, or reſt, in pronouncing: and theſe reſts ſhould be ſo diſtributed, as to make the courſe of the breathing eaſy, and, at the ſame time, ſhould fall at ſuch diſtances, as to bear a certain muſical proportion to each other. This will be beſt illuſtrated by examples. The following Sentence is from Archbiſhop Tillotſon: "This diſcourſe concerning the eaſineſs of God's commands does, all along, ſuppoſe and acknowledge the difficulties of the firſt entrance upon a religious courſe; except only in thoſe perſons who have had the happineſs to be trained up to religion by the eaſy and inſenſible degrees of a pious and virtuous education." Here there is no harmony; nay, there is ſome degree of harſhneſs and unpleaſantneſs; owing principally to this, that there is, properly, no more than one pauſe or reſt in the Sentence, falling betwixt the two members into which it is divided; each of which is ſo long, as to occaſion a conſiderable ſtretch of the breath in pronouncing it.

OBSERVE, now, on the other hand, the eaſe with which the following Sentence, from Sir William Temple, glides along, and the graceful intervals at which the pauſes are placed. He is ſpeaking ſarcaſtically of man: "But, God be thanked, his pride is greater than his ignorance, and what he wants in knowledge, he ſupplies by ſuffi-

ciency.

"ciency. When he has looked about him, as far as he can, he concludes, there is no more to be "ſeen; when he is at the end of his line, he is at "the bottom of the ocean; when he has ſhot his "beſt, he is ſure none ever did, or ever can, ſhoot "better or beyond it. His own reaſon he holds to "be the certain meaſure of truth; and his own "knowledge, of what is poſſible in nature *." Here every thing is, at once, eaſy to the breath, and grateful to the ear; and, it is this ſort of flowing meaſure, this regular and proportional diviſion of the members of his Sentences, which renders Sir William Temple's ſtyle always agreeable. I muſt obſerve, at the ſame time, that a Sentence, with too many reſts, and theſe placed at intervals too apparently meaſured and regular, is apt to ſavour of affectation.

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* Or this inſtance.—He is addreſſing himſelf to Lady Eſſex, upon the death of her child: "I was once in hope, that what "was ſo violent could not be long: But, when I obſerved "your grief to grow ſtronger with age, and to increaſe, like "a ſtream, the farther it ran; when I ſaw it draw out to ſuch "unhappy conſequences, and to threaten no leſs than your child, "your health and your life, I could no longer forbear this en-"deavour, nor end it without begging of you, for God's "ſake and for your own, for your children and your friends, "your country and your family, that you would no longer "abandon yourſelf to a diſconſolate paſſion; but that you "would, at length, awaken your piety, give way to your pru-"dence, or, at leaſt, rouze the invincible ſpirit of the Percys, "that never yet ſhrunk at any diſaſter."

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* "Let there be nothing harſh or abrupt in the concluſion "of the ſentence, on which the mind pauſes and reſts. This "is the moſt material part in the ſtructure of Diſcourſe. Here "every hearer expects to be gratified; here his applauſe breaks "forth."

THE

THE ſame holds in melody, that I obſerved to take place with reſpect to ſignificancy; that a falling off at the end always hurts greatly. For this reaſon, particles, pronouns, and little words, are as ungracious to the ear, at the concluſion, as I formerly ſhewed they were inconſiſtent with ſtrength of expreſſion. It is more than probable, that the ſenſe and the ſound have here a mutual influence on each other. That which hurts the ear, ſeems to mar the ſtrength of the meaning; and that which really degrades the ſenſe, in conſequence of this primary effect, appears alſo to have a bad ſound. How diſagreeable is the following Sentence of an Author, ſpeaking of the Trinity! "It is a myſtery which we firmly believe the "truth of, and humbly adore the depth of." And how eaſily might it have been mended by this tranſpoſition! "It is a myſtery, the truth of which "we firmly believe, and the depth of which we "humbly adore." In general, it ſeems to hold, that a muſical cloſe, in our language, requires either the laſt ſyllable, or the laſt but one, to be a long ſyllable. Words which conſiſt moſtly of ſhort ſyllables, as, *contrary*, *particular*, *retroſpect*, ſeldom conclude a Sentence harmoniouſly, unleſs a run of long ſyllables, before, has rendered them agreeable to the ear. LECT. XIII.

IT is neceſſary, however, to obſerve, that Sentences, ſo conſtructed as to make the ſound always ſwell and grow towards the end, and to reſt either on

LECT. XIII. on a long or a penult long ſyllable, give a diſcourſe the tone of declamation. The ear ſoon becomes acquainted with the melody, and is apt to be cloyed with it. If we would keep up the attention of the reader or hearer, if we would preſerve vivacity and ſtrength in our compoſition, we muſt be very attentive to vary our meaſures. This regards the diſtribution of the members, as well as the cadence of the Period. Sentences conſtructed in a ſimilar manner, with the pauſes falling at equal intervals, ſhould never follow one another. Short Sentences ſhould be intermixed with long and ſwelling ones, to render diſcourſe ſprightly, as well as magnificent. Even diſcords, properly introduced, abrupt ſounds, departures from regular cadence, have ſometimes a good effect. Monotony is the great fault into which writers are apt to fall, who are fond of harmonious arrangement: and to have only one tune, or meaſure, is not much better than having none at all. A very vulgar ear will enable a writer to catch ſome one melody, and to form the run of his Sentences according to it: which ſoon proves diſguſting. But a juſt and correct ear is requiſite for varying and diverſifying the melody, and hence we ſo ſeldom meet with authors, who are remarkably happy in this reſpect.

THOUGH attention to the muſic of Sentences muſt not be neglected, yet it muſt alſo be kept within proper bounds: for all appearances of an author's affecting harmony, are diſagreeable; eſpecially

pecially when the love of it betrays him ſo far, as to ſacrifice, in any inſtance, perſpicuity, preciſion, or ſtrength of ſentiment, to ſound. All unmeaning words, introduced merely to round the Period, or fill up the melody, *complementa numerorum*, as Cicero calls them, are great blemiſhes in writing. They are childiſh and puerile ornaments, by which a ſentence always loſes more in point of weight, than it can gain by ſuch additions to the beauty of its ſound. Senſe has its own harmony, as well as ſound; and, where the ſenſe of a Period is expreſſed with clearneſs, force, and dignity, it will ſeldom happen but the words will ſtrike the ear agreeably; at leaſt, a very moderate attention is all that is requiſite for making the cadence of ſuch a Period pleaſing: and the effect of greater attention is often no other, than to render compoſition languid and enervated. After all the labour which Quinctilian beſtows on regulating the meaſures of proſe, he comes at laſt, with his uſual good ſenſe, to this concluſion: "In univerſum, ſi ſit neceſſe, "duram potiùs atque aſperam compoſitionem malim "eſſe, quam effeminatam ac enervem, qualis apud "multos. Ideòque, vincta quædam de induſtria "ſunt ſolvenda, ne laborata videantur; neque ullum "idoneum aut aptum verbum prætermittamus, "gratiâ lenitatis *." Lib. ix. c. 4. LECT. XIII.

CICERO,

* "Upon the whole, I would rather chuſe, that compoſition "ſhould appear rough and harſh, if that be neceſſary, than "that

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CICERO, as I before obſerved, is one of the moſt remarkable patterns of a harmonious ſtyle. His love of it, however, is too viſible; and the pomp of his numbers ſometimes detracts from his ſtrength. That noted cloſe of his, *eſſe videatur*, which, in the Oration Pro Lege Manilia, occurs eleven times, expoſed him to cenſure among his contemporaries. We muſt obſerve, however, in defence of this great Orator, that there is a remarkable union in his ſtyle, of harmony with eaſe, which is always a great beauty: and if his harmony be ſtudied, that ſtudy appears to have coſt him little trouble.

AMONG our Engliſh claſſics, not many are diſtinguiſhed for muſical arrangement. Milton, in ſome of his proſe works, has very finely turned periods; but the writers of his age indulged a liberty of inverſion, which now would be reckoned contrary to purity of ſtyle: and though this allowed their Sentences to be more ſtately and ſonorous, yet it gave them too much of a Latiniſed conſtruction and order. Of later writers, Shaftſbury is, upon the whole, the moſt correct in his numbers.

"that it ſhould be enervated and effeminate, ſuch as we find "the ſtyle of too many. Some ſentences, therefore, which we "have ſtudiouſly formed into melody, ſhould be thrown looſe, "that they may not ſeem too much laboured; nor ought we "ever to omit any proper or expreſſive word, for the ſake of "ſmoothing a period."

As

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As his ear was delicate, he has attended to muſic in all his Sentences; and he is peculiarly happy in this reſpect, that he has avoided the monotony into which writers, who ſtudy the grace of ſound, are very apt to fall: having diverſified his periods with great variety. Mr. Addiſon has alſo much harmony in his ſtyle; more eaſy and ſmooth, but leſs varied, than Lord Shaftſbury. Sir William Temple is, in general, very flowing and agreeable. Archbiſhop Tillotſon is too often careleſs and languid; and is much outdone by Biſhop Atterbury in the muſic of his periods. Dean Swift deſpiſed muſical arrangement altogether.

HITHERTO I have diſcourſed of agreeable ſound, or modulation, in general. It yet remains to treat of a higher beauty of this kind; the ſound adapted to the ſenſe. The former was no more than a ſimple accompaniment, to pleaſe the ear; the latter ſuppoſes a peculiar expreſſion given to the muſic. We may remark two degrees of it: Firſt, the current of ſound, adapted to the tenor of a diſcourſe: next, a particular reſemblance effected between ſome object, and the ſounds that are employed in deſcribing it.

FIRST, I ſay, the current of ſound may be adapted to the tenor of a diſcourſe. Sounds have, in many reſpects, a correſpondence with our ideas; partly natural, partly the effect of artificial aſſociations. Hence it happens, that any one modulation

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of ſound continued, imprints on our Style a certain character and expreſſion. Sentences conſtructed with the Ciceronian fulneſs and ſwell, produce the impreſſion of what is important, magnificent, ſedate; for this is the natural tone which ſuch a courſe of ſentiment aſſumes. But they ſuit no violent paſſion, no eager reaſoning, no familiar addreſs. Theſe always require meaſures briſker, eaſier, and often more abrupt. And, therefore, to ſwell, or to let down the periods, as the ſubject demands, is a very important rule in oratory. No one tenor whatever, ſuppoſing it to produce no bad effect from ſatiety, will anſwer to all different compoſitions; nor even to all the parts of the ſame compoſition. It were as abſurd to write a panegyric, and an invective, in a ſtyle of the ſame cadence, as to ſet the words of a tender love-ſong to the air of a warlike march.

OBSERVE how finely the following Sentence of Cicero is adapted, to repreſent the tranquillity and eaſe of a ſatisfied ſtate: "Etſi homini nihil eſt "magis optandum quam proſpera, æquabilis, "perpetuaque fortuna, ſecundo vitæ ſine ulla of-"fenſione curſu; tamen, ſi mihi tranquilla et pla-"cata omnia fuiſſent, incredibili quâdam et pene "divinâ, quâ nunc veſtro beneficio fruor, lætitiæ "voluptate caruiſſem *." Nothing was ever more perfect in its kind: it paints, if we may ſo ſpeak,

* Orat. ad Quirites, poſt Reditum.

to

to the ear. But, who would not have laughed, if Cicero had employed ſuch periods, or ſuch a cadence as this, in inveighing againſt Mark Antony, or Catiline? What is requiſite, therefore, is, that we previouſly fix, in our mind, a juſt idea of the general tone of ſound which ſuits our ſubject; that is, which the ſentiments we are to expreſs, moſt naturally aſſume, and in which they moſt commonly vent themſelves; whether round and ſmooth, or ſtately and ſolemn, or briſk and quick, or interrupted and abrupt. This general idea muſt direct the modulation of our periods: to ſpeak in the ſtyle of muſic, muſt give us the key note, muſt form the ground of the melody; varied and diverſified in parts, according as either our ſentiments are diverſified, or as is requiſite for producing a ſuitable variety to gratify the ear. LECT. XIII.

It may be proper to remark, that our tranſlators of the Bible have often been happy in ſuiting their numbers to the ſubject. Grave, ſolemn, and majeſtic ſubjects undoubtedly require ſuch an arrangement of words as runs much on long ſyllables; and, particularly, they require the cloſe to reſt upon ſuch. The very firſt verſes of the Bible, are remarkable for this melody; "In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth; and the earth was without form, and void; and darkneſs was upon the face of the deep; and the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters." Several other paſſages, particularly

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ſome of the Pſalms, afford ſtriking examples of this ſort of grave, melodious conſtruction. Any compoſition that riſes conſiderably above the ordinary tone of proſe, ſuch as monumental inſcriptions, and panegyrical characters, naturally runs into numbers of this kind.

BUT, in the next place, beſides the general correſpondence of the current of ſound with the current of thought, there may be a more particular expreſſion attempted, of certain objects, by means of reſembling ſounds. This can be ſometimes accompliſhed in proſe compoſition; but there only in a more faint degree; nor is it ſo much expected there. In poetry, chiefly, it is looked for; where attention to ſound is more demanded, and where the inverſions and liberties of poetical ſtyle give us a greater command of ſound; aſſiſted, too, by the verſification, and that *cantus obſcurior*, to which we are naturally led in reading poetry. This requires a little more illuſtration.

THE ſounds of words may be employed for repreſenting, chiefly, three claſſes of objects; firſt, other ſounds; ſecondly, motion; and, thirdly, the emotions and paſſions of the mind.

FIRST, I ſay, by a proper choice of words, we may produce a reſemblance of other ſounds which we mean to deſcribe; ſuch as, the noiſe of waters, the roaring of winds, or the murmuring of ſtreams.

This is the ſimpleſt inſtance of this ſort of beauty. For the medium through which we imitate, here, is a natural one; ſounds repreſented by other ſounds; and between ideas of the ſame ſenſe, it is eaſy to form a connection. No very great art is required in a poet, when he is deſcribing ſweet and ſoft ſounds, to make uſe of ſuch words as have moſt liquids and vowels, and glide the ſofteſt; or, when he is deſcribing harſh ſounds, to throw together a number of harſh ſyllables which are of difficult pronunciation. Here the common ſtructure of Language aſſiſts him; for, it will be found, that, in moſt Languages, the names of many particular ſounds are ſo formed, as to carry ſome affinity to the ſound which they ſignify; as with us, the *whiſtling* of winds, the *buz* and *hum* of inſects, the *hiſs* of ſerpents, the *craſh* of falling timber; and many other inſtances, where the word has been plainly framed upon the ſound it repreſents. I ſhall produce a remarkable example of this beauty from Milton, taken from two paſſages in Paradiſe Loſt, deſcribing the ſound made, in the one, by the opening of the gates of Hell; in the other, by the opening of thoſe of Heaven. The contraſt between the two, diſplays, to great advantage, the poet's art. The firſt is the opening of Hell's gates:

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——On a ſudden, open fly,
With impetuous recoil, and jarring ſound,
Th' infernal doors; and on their hinges grate
Harſh thunder—— B. i.

LECT. XIII. Obſerve, now, the ſmoothneſs of the other:

——Heaven opened wide
Her ever-during gates, harmonious ſound,
On golden hinges turning.—— B. ii.

The following beautiful paſſage from Taſſo's Gieruſalemme, has been often admired, on account of the imitation effected by ſound of the thing repreſented:

Chiama gli habitator de l'ombre eterne
Il rauco ſuon de la Tartarea tromba:
Treman le ſpacioſe atre caverne,
Et l'aer cieco a quel rumor rimbomba;
Ni ſtridendo coſi de la ſuperne
Regioni dele cielo, il folgor piomba;
Ne ſi ſcoſſa giammai la terra,
Quand i vapori in ſen gravida ſerra.

CANT. IV. Stanz. 4.

THE ſecond claſs of objects, which the ſound of words is often employed to imitate, is, Motion; as it is ſwift or ſlow, violent or gentle, equable or interrupted, eaſy or accompanied with effort. Though there be no natural affinity between ſound, of any kind, and motion, yet, in the imagination, there is a ſtrong one; as appears from the connection between muſic and dancing. And therefore, here it is in the poet's power to give us a lively idea of the kind of motion he would deſcribe, by means of ſounds which correſpond, in our imagination, with that motion. Long ſyllables natu-

rally give the impreſſion of ſlow emotion; as in this line of Virgil: LECT. XIII.

Olli inter ſeſe magna vi brachia tollunt.

A ſucceſſion of ſhort ſyllables preſents quick motion to the mind; as,

Quadrupedante putrem ſonitu quatit ungula campum.

BOTH Homer and Virgil are great maſters of this beauty, and their works abound with inſtances of it; moſt of them, indeed, ſo often quoted and ſo well known that it is needleſs to produce them. I ſhall give one inſtance, in Engliſh, which ſeems happy. It is the deſcription of a ſudden calm on the ſeas, in a Poem, intitled, *The Fleece.*

——With eaſy courſe
The veſſels glide; unleſs their ſpeed be ſtopped
By dead calms, that oft lie on theſe ſmooth ſeas
When every zephyr ſleeps; then the ſhrouds drop;
The downy feather on the cordage hung
Moves not; the flat ſea ſhines like yellow gold
Fus'd in the fire, or like the marble floor
Of ſome old temple wide.——

THE third ſet of objects, which I mentioned the ſound of words as capable of repreſenting, conſiſts of the paſſions and emotions of the mind. Sound may, at firſt view, appear foreign to theſe; but, that here, alſo, there is ſome ſort of connection, is ſufficiently proved by the power which muſic has

to

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to awaken, or to aſſiſt certain paſſions, and, according as its ſtrain is varied, to introduce one train of ideas, rather than another. This, indeed, logically ſpeaking, cannot be called a reſemblance between the ſenſe and the ſound, ſeeing long or ſhort ſyllables have no natural reſemblance to any thought or paſſion. But if the arrangement of ſyllables, by their ſound alone, recal one ſet of ideas more readily than another, and diſpoſe the mind for entering into that affection which the poet means to raiſe, ſuch arrangement may, juſtly enough, be ſaid to reſemble the ſenſe, or be ſimilar and correſpondent to it. I admit, that, in many inſtances, which are ſuppoſed to diſplay this beauty of accommodation of ſound to the ſenſe, there is much room for imagination to work; and, according as a reader is ſtruck by a paſſage, he will often fancy a reſemblance between the ſound and the ſenſe, which others cannot diſcover. He modulates the numbers to his own diſpoſition of mind; and, in effect, makes the muſic which he imagines himſelf to hear. However, that there are real inſtances of this kind, and that poetry is capable of ſome ſuch expreſſion, cannot be doubted. Dryden's Ode on St. Cecilia's Day, affords a very beautiful exemplification of it, in the Engliſh language. Without much ſtudy or reflection, a poet deſcribing pleaſure, joy, and agreeable objects, from the feeling of his ſubject, naturally runs into ſmooth, liquid, and flowing numbers:

——Namque

——Namque ipſa decoram
Cæſariem nato genetrix, lumenque juventæ
Purpureum, et lætos oculis afflârat honores.

Æn. I.

Or,

Devenêre locos lætos & amæna vireta,
Fortunatorum memorum, ſedeſque beatas;
Largior hic campos æther, & lumine veſtit
Purpureo, ſolemque ſuum, ſua ſidera nôrant.

Æn. VI.

Briſk and lively ſenſations exact quicker and more animated numbers:

——Juvenum manus emicat ardens
Littus in Heſperium. Æn. VII.

Melancholy and gloomy ſubjects naturally expreſs themſelves in ſlow meaſures, and long words:

In thoſe deep ſolitudes and awful cells,
Where heavenly penſive contemplation dwells,
Et caligantem nigrâ formidine lucum.

I HAVE now given ſufficient openings into this ſubject: a moderate acquaintance with the good poets, either ancient or modern, will ſuggeſt many inſtances of the ſame kind. And with this, I finiſh the diſcuſſion of the Structure of Sentences; having fully conſidered them under all the heads I mentioned; of Perſpicuity, Unity, Strength, and Muſical Arrangement.

LECTURE XIV.

ORIGIN AND NATURE OF FIGURATIVE LANGUAGE.

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HAVING now finiſhed what related to the conſtruction of ſentences, I proceed to other rules concerning Style. My general diviſion of the qualities of Style, was into Perſpicuity and Ornament. Perſpicuity, both in ſingle words and in Sentences, I have conſidered. Ornament, as far as it ariſes from a graceful, ſtrong, or melodious conſtruction of words, has alſo been treated of. Another, and a great branch of the ornament of Style, is, Figurative Language; which is now to be the ſubject of our conſideration, and will require a full diſcuſſion.

OUR firſt inquiry muſt be, what is meant by Figures of Speech*?

* On the ſubject of Figures of Speech, all the writers who treat of rhetoric or compoſition, have inſiſted largely. To make references, therefore, on this ſubject, were endleſs. On the foundations

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In general, they always imply ſome departure from ſimplicity of expreſſion; the idea which we intend to convey, not only enunciated to others, but enunciated in a particular manner, and with ſome circumſtance added which is deſigned to render the impreſſion more ſtrong and vivid. When I ſay, for inſtance, "That a good man "enjoys comfort in the midſt of adverſity;" I juſt expreſs my thought in the ſimpleſt manner poſſible. But when I ſay, "To the upright there ariſeth "light in darkneſs;" the ſame ſentiment is expreſſed in a Figurative Style; a new circumſtance is introduced; light is put in the place of comfort, and darkneſs is uſed to ſuggeſt the idea of adverſity. In the ſame manner to ſay, "It is impoſ- "ſible, by any ſearch we can make, to explore "the divine nature fully," is to make a ſimple propoſition. But when we ſay, "Canſt thou, by "ſearching, find out God? Canſt thou find out "the Almighty to perfection? It is high as Hea- "ven, what canſt thou do? deeper than Hell, "what canſt thou know?" This introduces a Figure into Style; the propoſition being not only expreſſed, but admiration and aſtoniſhment being expreſſed together with it.

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foundations of Figurative Language, in general, one of the moſt ſenſible and inſtructive writers appears to me to be M. Marſais, in his *Traité des Tropes pour ſervir d'Introduction à la Rhetorique, & à la Logique.* For obſervations on particular Figures, the *Elements of Criticiſm* may be conſulted, where the ſubject is fully handled, and illuſtrated by a great variety of examples.

But,

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BUT, though Figures imply a deviation from what may be reckoned the moſt ſimple form of Speech, we are not thence to conclude, that they imply any thing uncommon or unnatural. This is ſo far from being the caſe, that on very many occaſions, they are both the moſt natural, and the moſt common method of uttering our ſentiments. It is impoſſible to compoſe any diſcourſe without uſing them often; nay, there are few ſentences of any length, in which ſome expreſſion or other, that may be termed a Figure, does not occur. From what cauſes this happens, ſhall be afterwards explained. The fact, in the mean time, ſhews that they are to be accounted part of that Language which Nature dictates to men. They are not the inventions of the ſchools, nor the mere product of ſtudy: on the contrary, the moſt illiterate ſpeak in Figures, as often as the moſt learned. Whenever the imaginations of the vulgar are much awakened, or their paſſions inflamed againſt one another, they will pour forth a torrent of Figurative Language, as forcibly as could be employed by the moſt artificial declaimer.

WHAT then is it, which has drawn the attention of critics and rhetoricians ſo much to theſe forms of Speech? It is this: They remarked, that in them conſiſts much of the beauty and the force of Language; and found them always to bear ſome characters, or diſtinguiſhing marks, by the help of which they could reduce them under ſeparate claſſes and heads. To this, perhaps, they owe their name

of

of Figures. As the figure or ſhape of one body diſtinguiſhes it from another, ſo theſe forms of Speech have, each of them, a caſt or turn peculiar to itſelf, which both diſtinguiſhes it from the reſt, and diſtinguiſhes it from Simple Expreſſion. Simple Expreſſion juſt makes our idea known to others; but Figurative Language, over and above, beſtows a particular dreſs upon that idea; a dreſs, which both makes it to be remarked, and adorns it. Hence, this ſort of Language became early a capital object of attention to thoſe who ſtudied the powers of Speech.

FIGURES, in general, may be deſcribed to be that Language, which is prompted either by the imagination, or by the paſſions. The juſtneſs of this deſcription will appear, from the more particular account I am afterwards to give of them. Rhetoricians commonly divide them into two great claſſes; Figures of Words, and Figures of Thought. The former, Figures of Words, are commonly called Tropes, and conſiſt in a word's being employed to ſignify ſomething that is different from its original and primitive meaning; ſo that if you alter the word, you deſtroy the Figure. Thus, in the inſtance I gave before; "Light "ariſeth to the upright in darkneſs." The Trope conſiſts in "light and darkneſs," being not meant literally, but ſubſtituted for comfort and adverſity, on account of ſome reſemblance or analogy which they are ſuppoſed to bear to theſe conditions of life.

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life. The other claſs, termed Figures of Thought, ſuppoſes the words to be uſed in their proper and literal meaning, and the Figure to conſiſt in the turn of the thought; as is the caſe in exclamations, interrogations, apoſtrophes, and compariſons; where, though you vary the words that are uſed, or tranſlate them from one Language into another, you may, nevertheleſs, ſtill preſerve the ſame Figure in the Thought. This diſtinction, however, is of no great uſe; as nothing can be built upon it in practice; neither is it always very clear. It is of little importance, whether we give to ſome particular mode of expreſſion the name of a Trope, or of a Figure; provided we remember, that Figurative Language always imports ſome colouring of the imagination, or ſome emotion of paſſion, expreſſed in our Style: And, perhaps, Figures of Imagination, and Figures of Paſſion, might be a more uſeful diſtribution of the ſubject. But, without inſiſting on any artificial diviſions, it will be more uſeful, that I inquire into the Origin and the Nature of Figures. Only, before I proceed to this, there are two general obſervations which it may be proper to premiſe.

THE firſt is, concerning the uſe of rules with reſpect to Figurative Language. I admit, that perſons may both ſpeak and write with propriety who know not the names of any of the Figures of Speech, nor ever ſtudied any rules relating to them. Nature, as was before obſerved, dictates the

the uſe of Figures; and like Monſ. Jourdain, in Moliere, who had ſpoken for forty years in proſe, without ever knowing it, many a one uſes metaphorical expreſſions for good purpoſe, without any idea of what a metaphor is. It will not, however, follow thence, that rules are of no ſervice. All ſcience ariſes from obſervations on practice. Practice has always gone before method and rule: but method and rule have afterwards improved and perfected practice, in every art. We every day, meet with perſons who ſing agreeably, without knowing one note of the gamut. Yet it has been found of importance to reduce theſe notes to a ſcale, and to form an art of muſic; and it would be ridiculous to pretend, that the art is of no advantage, becauſe the practice is founded in nature. Propriety and beauty of ſpeech are certainly as improveable as the ear or the voice; and to know the principles of this beauty, or the reaſons which render one Figure, or one manner of Speech, preferable to another, cannot fail to aſſiſt and direct a proper choice. LECT. XIV.

But I muſt obſerve in the next place, that, although this part of Style merits attention, and is a very proper object of ſcience and rule; although much of the beauty of compoſition depends on Figurative Language; yet we muſt beware of imagining that it depends ſolely, or even chiefly, upon ſuch Language. It is not ſo. The great place which the doctrine of Tropes and Figures has

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occupied in ſyſtems of rhetoric; the over-anxious care which has been ſhewn in giving names to a vaſt variety of them, and in ranging them under different claſſes, has often led perſons to imagine, that, if their compoſition was well beſpangled with a number of theſe ornaments of Speech, it wanted no other beauty; whence has ariſen much ſtiffneſs and affectation. For it is, in truth, the ſentiment or paſſion, which lies under the figured expreſſion, that gives it any merit. The Figure is only the dreſs; the Sentiment is the body and the ſubſtance. No Figures will render a cold or an empty compoſition intereſting; whereas, if a ſentiment be ſublime or pathetic, it can ſupport itſelf perfectly well, without any borrowed aſſiſtance. Hence, ſeveral of the moſt affecting and admired paſſages of the *beſt* authors, are expreſſed in the ſimpleſt language. The following ſentiment, from Virgil, for inſtance, makes its way at once to the heart, without the help of any Figure whatever. He is deſcribing an Argive, who falls in battle in Italy, at a great diſtance from *his* native country.

Sternitur, infelix, alieno vulnere, cœlumque
Aſpicit, et dulces moriens reminiſcitur Argos*

ÆN. X. 781.

A ſin-

* "Anthares had from Argos travell'd far,
"Alcides' friend, and brother of the war;
"Now falling, by another's wound, his eyes
"He caſts to Heaven, on Argos thinks and dies."

IN

A ſingle ſtroke of this kind, drawn as by the very pencil of Nature, is worth a thouſand Figures. In the ſame manner, the ſimple ſtyle of Scripture: "He ſpoke, and it was done; he commanded, "and it ſtood faſt."—"God ſaid, Let there be "light; and there was light;" imparts a lofty conception to much greater advantage, than if it had been decorated by the moſt pompous metaphors. The fact is, that the ſtrong pathetic, and LECT. XIV.

In this tranſlation much of the beauty of the original is loſt. "On Argos thinks, and dies," is by no means equal to "dulces moriens reminiſcitur Argos:" "As he dies, he re-"members his beloved Argos.——It is indeed obſervable, that in moſt of thoſe tender and pathetic paſſages, which do ſo much honour to Virgil, that great poet expreſſes himſelf with the utmoſt ſimplicity; as,

Te, dulcis Conjux, te ſolo in littore ſecum,
Te veniente die, te decedente canebat. GEORG. IV.

And ſo in that moving prayer of Evander, upon his parting with his ſon Pallas:

At vos, O Superi! et Divûm tu maxime rector
Jupiter, Arcadii quæſo miſereſcite regis,
Et patrias audite preces. Si numina veſtra
Incolumem Pallanta mihi, ſi fata reſervant,
Si viſurus eum vivo, et venturus in unum,
Vitam oro; patiar quemvis durare laborem!
Sin aliquen infandum caſum, Fortuna, minaris,
Nunc, O nunc liceat crudelem abrumpere vitam!
Dum curæ ambiguæ, dum ſpes incerta futuri;
Dum te, chare Puer! mea ſera et ſola voluptas!
Amplexu teneo; gravior ne nuncius aures
Vulneret—— ÆN. VII. 572.

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the pure ſublime, not only have little dependance on figures of Speech, but, generally, reject them. The proper region of theſe ornaments is, where a moderate degree of elevation and paſſion is predominant; and there they contribute to the embelliſhment of diſcourſe, only when there is a baſis of ſolid thought and natural ſentiment; when they are inſerted in their proper place; and when they riſe, of themſelves, from the ſubject, without being ſought after.

HAVING premiſed theſe obſervations, I proceed to give an account of the origin and nature of Figures; principally of ſuch as have their dependance on language; including that numerous tribe, which the rhetoricians call Tropes.

AT the firſt riſe of language, men would begin with giving names to the different objects which they diſcerned or thought of. This nomenclature would, at the beginning, be very narrow. According as men's ideas multiplied, and their acquaintance with objects increaſed, their ſtock of names and words would increaſe alſo. But to the infinite variety of objects and ideas no language is adequate. No language is ſo copious, as to have a ſeparate word for every ſeparate idea. Men naturally ſought to abridge this labour of multiplying words *in infinitum*; and in order to lay leſs burden on their memories, made one word, which they had already appropriated to a certain

idea or object, ſtand alſo for ſome other idea or object, between which and the primary one, they found, or fancied, ſome relation. Thus, the preposition, *in*, was originally invented to expreſs the circumſtance of place: "The man was killed *in* "the wood." In progreſs of time, words were wanted to expreſs men's being connected with certain conditions of fortune, or certain ſituations of mind; and ſome reſemblance, or analogy, being fancied between theſe, and the place of bodies, the word, *in*, was employed to expreſs men's being ſo circumſtanced; as, one's being *in* health, or *in* ſickneſs, *in* proſperity, or *in* adverſity, *in* joy, or *in* grief, *in* doubt, or *in* danger, or *in* ſafety. Here we ſee this preposition, *in*, plainly, aſſuming a tropical ſignification, or carried off from its original meaning, to ſignify ſomething elſe which relates to, or reſembles it.

TROPES of this kind abound in all Languages; and are plainly owing to the want of proper words. The operations of the mind and affections, in particular are, in moſt languages, deſcribed by words taken from ſenſible objects. The reaſon is plain. The names of ſenſible objects were, in all languages, the words moſt early introduced; and were, by degrees, extended to thoſe mental objects of which men had more obſcure conceptions, and to which they found it more difficult to aſſign diſtinct names. They borrowed, therefore, the name of ſome ſenſible idea, where their imagina-

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tion found ſome affinity. Thus we ſpeak of a *piercing* judgment, and a *clear* head; a *ſoft* or a *hard* heart; a *rough* or a *ſmooth* behaviour. We ſay, *inflamed* by anger, *warmed* by love, *ſwelled* with pride, *melted* into grief; and theſe are almoſt the only ſignificant words which we have for ſuch ideas.

But, although the barrenneſs of language, and the want of words, be doubtleſs one cauſe of the invention of Tropes; yet it is not the only, nor, perhaps, even the principal ſource of this form of ſpeech. Tropes have ariſen more frequently, and ſpread themſelves wider, from the influence which Imagination poſſeſſes over Language. The train on which this has proceeded among all nations, I ſhall endeavour to explain.

Every object which makes any impreſſion on the human mind, is conſtantly accompanied with certain circumſtances and relations, that ſtrike us at the ſame time. It never preſents itſelf to our view, *iſolé*, as the French expreſs it; that is, independent on, and ſeparated from, every other thing; but always occurs as ſomehow related to other objects; going before them, or following them; their effect or their cauſe; reſembling them, or oppoſed to them; diſtinguiſhed by certain qualities, or ſurrounded with certain circumſtances. By this means, every idea or object carries in its train ſome other ideas, which may be conſidered

as its acceſſories. Theſe acceſſories often ſtrike the imagination more than the principal idea itſelf. They are, perhaps, more agreeable ideas; or they are more familiar to our conceptions; or they recall to our memory a greater variety of important circumſtances. The imagination is more diſpoſed to reſt upon ſome of them; and therefore, inſtead of uſing the proper name of the principal idea which it means to expreſs, it employs, in its place, the name of the acceſſory or correſpondent idea; although the principal have a proper and well-known name of its own. Hence, a vaſt variety of tropical or figurative words obtain currency in all languages, through choice, not neceſſity; and men of lively imaginations are every day adding to their number. LECT. XIV.

THUS, when we deſign to intimate the period at which a ſtate enjoyed moſt reputation or glory, it were eaſy to employ the proper words for expreſſing this; but as this is readily connected, in our imagination, with the flouriſhing period of a plant or a tree. we lay hold of this correſpondent idea, and ſay, "The Roman empire flouriſhed "moſt under Auguſtus." The leader of a faction is plain language; but becauſe the head is the principal part of the human body, and is ſuppoſed to direct all the animal operations, reſting upon this reſemblance, we ſay "Catiline was the "head of the party." The word *Voice*, was

LECT. XIV. originally invented to ſignify the articulate ſound, formed by the organs of the mouth; but, as by means of it men ſignify their ideas and their intentions to each other, *Voice* ſoon aſſumed a great many other meanings, all derived from this primary effect. "To give our Voice" for any thing, ſignified, to give our ſentiment in favour of it. Not only ſo; but *Voice* was transferred to ſignify any intimation of will or judgment, though given without the leaſt interpoſition of Voice in its literal ſenſe, or any ſound uttered at all. Thus, we ſpeak of liſtening to the *Voice* of Conſcience, the *Voice* of Nature, the *Voice* of God. This uſage takes place, not ſo much from barrenneſs of language, or want of a proper word, as from an alluſion which we chooſe to make to *Voice*, in its primary ſenſe, in order to convey our idea, connected with a circumſtance which appears to the fancy to give it more ſprightlineſs and force.

THE account which I have now given, and which ſeems to be a full and fair one, of the introduction of Tropes into all Languages, coincides with what Cicero briefly hints in his third book de Oratore. "Modus transferendi verba latè patet; "quam neceſſitas primum genuit, coacta inopia "et anguſtias: poſt autem delectatio, jucundi- "taſque celebravit. Nam ut veſtis, frigoris "depellendi causâ reperta primo, poſt adhiberi "cæpta eſt ad ornatum etiam corporis et digni- "tatem,

"tatem, ſic verbi tranſlatio inſtituta eſt inopiæ "causâ, frequentata, delectationis *."

FROM what has been ſaid it clearly appears, how that muſt come to paſs, which I had occaſion to mention in a former Lecture, that all Languages are moſt figurative in their early ſtate. Both the cauſes to which I aſcribed the origin of Figures, concur in producing this effect at the beginnings of ſociety. Language is then moſt barren; the ſtock of proper names which have been invented for things, is ſmall; and at the ſame time, imagination exerts great influence over the conceptions of men, and their method of uttering them; ſo that, both from neceſſity and from choice, their Speech, will, at that period, abound in Tropes. For the ſavage tribes of men are always much given to wonder and aſtoniſhment. Every new object ſurpriſes, terrifies, and makes a ſtrong impreſſion on their mind; they are governed by imagination and paſſion more than by reaſon; and, of courſe, their ſpeech muſt be deeply tinctured by their genius. In fact, we find, that this is the character of the American and Indian Languages;

* "The figurative uſage of words is very extenſive; an uſage "to which neceſſity firſt gave riſe, on account of the paucity of "words, and barrenneſs of Language; but which the pleaſure "that was found in it afterwards rendered frequent. For, as "garments were firſt contrived to defend our bodies from the "cold, and afterwards were employed for the purpoſe of orna-"ment and dignity, ſo Figures of Speech, introduced by want, "were cultivated for the ſake of entertainment."

bold,

LECT. XIV. bold, pictureſque, and metaphorical; full of ſtrong alluſions to ſenſible qualities, and to ſuch objects as ſtruck them moſt in their wild and ſolitary life. An Indian chief makes a harangue to his tribe, in a ſtyle full of ſtronger metaphors than an European would uſe in an epic poem.

As Language makes gradual progreſs towards refinement, almoſt every object comes to have a proper name given to it, and Perſpicuity and Preciſion are more ſtudied. But, ſtill, for the reaſons before given, borrowed words, or, as rhetoricians call them, Tropes, muſt continue to occupy a conſiderable place. In every Language, too, there are a multitude of words, which, though they were Figurative in their firſt application to certain objects, yet, by long uſe, loſe that Figurative power wholly, and come to be conſidered as ſimple and literal expreſſions. In this caſe, are the terms which I remarked before, as transferred from ſenſible qualities, to the operations or qualities of the mind, a *piercing* judgment, a *clear* head, a *hard* heart, and the like. There are other words which remain in a ſort of middle ſtate; which have neither loſt wholly their Figurative application, nor yet retain ſo much of it, as to imprint any remarkable character of figured Language on our Style; ſuch as theſe phraſes, "apprehend one's "meaning;" "enter on a ſubject;" "follow up "an argument;" "ſtir up ſtrife;" and a great many more, of which our Language is full. In the uſe of ſuch phraſes, correct writers will always preſerve

preſerve a regard to the figure or alluſion on which they are founded, and will be careful not to apply them in any way that is inconſiſtent with it. One may be "ſheltered under the patronage of a "great man;" but it were wrong to ſay, "ſhel-"tered under the maſque of diſſimulation;" as a maſque conceals, but does not ſhelter. An object, in deſcription, may be "clothed," if you will, "with epithets;" but it is not ſo proper to ſpeak of its being "clothed with circumſtances;" as the word "circumſtances" alludes to ſtanding round, not to clothing. Such attentions as theſe, to the propriety of Language, are requiſite in every compoſition. LECT. XIV.

WHAT has been ſaid on this ſubject, tends to throw light on the nature of Language in general; and will lead to the reaſons, Why Tropes or Figures contribute to the beauty and grace of Style.

FIRST, They enrich Language, and render it more copious. By their means, words and phraſes are multiplied for expreſſing all ſorts of ideas; for deſcribing even the minuteſt differences; the niceſt ſhades and colours of thought; which no Language could poſſibly do by proper words alone, without aſſiſtance from Tropes.

SECONDLY, They beſtow dignity upon Style. The familiarity of common words, to which our ears are much accuſtomed, tends to degrade Style. When we want to adapt our Language to the tone of an elevated ſubject, we ſhould be greatly at a loſs,

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a loſs, if we could not borrow aſſiſtance from Figures; which, properly employed, have a ſimilar effect on Language, with what is produced by the rich and ſplendid dreſs of a perſon of rank; to create reſpect, and to give an air of magnificence to him who wears it. Aſſiſtance of this kind is often needed in proſe compoſitions; but poetry could not ſubſiſt without it. Hence, Figures form the conſtant Language of poetry. To ſay, that "the ſun riſes," is trite and common; but it becomes a magnificent image when expreſſed, as Mr. Thomſon has done:

> But yonder comes the powerful king of day,
> Rejoicing in the eaſt.——

To ſay that "all men are ſubject alike to death," preſents only a vulgar idea; but it riſes and fills the imagination, when painted thus by Horace:

> Pallida mors æquo pulſat pede, pauperam tabernas
> Regumque turres.

Or,

> Omnes eodem cogimur; omnium,
> Verſatur urna, ſerius, ocyus,
> Sors exitura, & nos in eternum
> Exilium impoſitura cymbæ*.

---

* With equal pace impartial fate
Knocks at the palace, as the cottage gate.

Or,

We all muſt tread the paths of fate;
And ever ſhakes the mortal urn,
Whoſe lot embarks us, ſoon or late,
On Charon's boat; ah! never to return. FRANCIS.

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In the third place, Figures give us the pleaſure of enjoying two objects preſented together to our view, without confuſion; the principal idea, which is the ſubject of the diſcourſe, along with its acceſſory, which gives it the figurative dreſs. We ſee one thing in another, as Ariſtotle expreſſes it; which is always agreeable to the mind. For there is nothing with which the fancy is more delighted, than with compariſons, and reſemblances of objects; and all Tropes are founded upon ſome relation or analogy between one thing and another. When, for inſtance, in place of "youth," I ſay, the "morning of life;" the fancy is immediately entertained with all the reſembling circumſtances which preſently occur between theſe two objects. At one moment, I have in my eye a certain period of human life, and a certain time of the day, ſo related to each other, that the imagination plays between them with pleaſure, and contemplates two ſimilar objects, in one view, without embarraſſment or confuſion. Not only ſo, but,

In the fourth place, Figures are attended with this farther advantage, of giving us frequently a much clearer and more ſtriking view of the principal object, than we could have if it were expreſſed in ſimple terms, and diveſted of its acceſſory idea. This is, indeed, their principal advantage, in virtue of which, they are very properly ſaid to illuſtrate a ſubject, or to throw light upon it. For they exhibit the object, on which they

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they are employed in a picturesque form; they can render an abstract conception, in some degree, an object of sense; they surround it with such circumstances as enable the mind to lay hold of it steadily, and to contemplate it fully. "Those "persons," says one, "who gain the hearts of "most people, who are chosen as the companions "of their softer hours, and their reliefs from "anxiety and care, are seldom persons of shining "qualities, or strong virtues: it is rather the soft "green of the soul on which we rest our eyes, "that are fatigued with beholding more glaring "objects." Here, by a happy allusion to a colour, the whole conception is conveyed clear and strong to the mind in one word. By a well chosen Figure, even conviction is assisted, and the impression of a truth upon the mind made more lively and forcible than it would otherwise be. As in the following illustration of Dr. Young's: "When we dip too deep in pleasure, we always "stir a sediment that renders it impure and "noxious:" or in this, "A heart boiling with "violent passions, will always send up infatuating "fumes to the head." An image that presents so much congruity between a moral and a sensible idea, serves, like an argument from analogy, to enforce what the author asserts, and to induce belief.

Besides, whether we are endeavouring to raise sentiments of pleasure or aversion, we can always heighten

heighten the emotion by the Figures which we introduce? leading the imagination to a train, either of agreeable or diſagreeable, of exalting or debaſing ideas, correſpondent to the impreſſion which we ſeek to make. When we want to render an object beautiful or magnificent, we borrow images from all the moſt beautiful or ſplendid ſcenes of nature; we thereby, naturally throw a luſtre over our object; we enliven the reader's mind, and diſpoſe him to go along with us, in the gay and pleaſing impreſſions which we give him of the ſubject. This effect of figures is happily touched in the following lines of Dr. Akenſide, and illuſtrated by a very ſublime Figure:

——Then the inexpreſſive ſtrain
Diffuſes its enchantment. Fancy dreams
Of ſacred fountains and Elyſian groves,
And vales of bliſs, the intellectual Power
Bends from his awful throne a wond'ring ear,
And ſmiles.—— Pleaſ. of Imaginat. I. 124.

WHAT I have now explained, concerning the uſe and effects of Figures, naturally leads us to reflect on the wonderful power of Language; and indeed, we cannot reflect on it without the higheſt admiration. What a fine vehicle is it now become for all the conceptions of the human mind; even for the moſt ſubtile and delicate workings of the imagination! What a pliant and flexible inſtrument in the hand of one who can employ it ſkilfully; prepared to take every form which he chuſes to

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give it! Not content with a ſimple communication of ideas and thoughts, it paints thoſe ideas to the eye; it gives colouring and relievo, even to the moſt abſtract conceptions. In the Figures which it uſes, it ſets mirrors before us, where we may behold objects, a ſecond time, in their likeneſs. It entertains us, as with a ſucceſſion of the moſt ſplendid pictures; diſpoſes, in the moſt artificial manner, of the light and ſhade, for viewing every thing to the beſt advantage; in fine, from being a rude and imperfect interpreter of men's wants and neceſſities, it has now paſſed into an inſtrument of the moſt delicate and refined luxury.

To make theſe effects of Figurative Language ſenſible, there are few authors in the Engliſh Language whom I can refer to with more advantage than Mr. Addiſon, whoſe imagination is at once, remarkably rich, and remarkably correct and chaſte. When he is treating, for inſtance, of the effect which light and colours have to entertain the fancy, conſidered in Mr. Locke's view of them as ſecondary qualities, which have no real exiſtence in matter, but are only ideas in the mind, with what beautiful painting has he adorned this philoſophic ſpeculation! "Things," ſays he, "would make but a poor "appearance to the eye, if we ſaw them only in "their proper figures and motions. Now, we "are every where entertained with pleaſing ſhows "and apparitions; we diſcover imaginary glories "in the heavens, and in the earth, and ſee ſome "of

" of this viſionary beauty poured out upon the
" whole creation. But what a rough unſightly
" ſketch of Nature ſhould we be entertained with,
" did all her colouring diſappear, and the ſeveral
" diſtinctions of light and ſhade vaniſh? In ſhort,
" our ſouls are, at preſent, delightfully loſt, and
" bewildered in a pleaſing deluſion, and we walk
" about like the enchanted hero of a romance,
" who ſees beautiful caſtles, woods, and meadows;
" and at the ſame time hears the warbling of birds,
" and the purling of ſtreams; but upon the finiſh-
" ing of ſome ſecret ſpell the fantaſtic ſcene breaks
" up, and the diſconſolate knight finds himſelf on
" a barren heath, or in a ſolitary deſert. It is
" not improbable that ſomething like this may be
" the ſtate of the ſoul after its firſt ſeparation, in re-
" ſpect of the images, it will receive from matter."
No. 413. Spec.

HAVING thus explained, at ſufficient length, the Origin, the Nature, and the Effects of Tropes, I ſhould proceed next to the ſeveral kinds and diviſions of them. But, in treating of theſe, were I to follow the common tract of the ſcholaſtic writers on Rhetoric, I ſhould ſoon become tedious, and, I apprehend, uſeleſs, at the ſame time. Their great buſineſs has been, with a moſt patient and frivolous induſtry, to branch them out under a vaſt number of diviſions, according to all the ſeveral modes in which a word may be carried from its literal meaning, into one that is Figurative,

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without doing any more; as if the mere knowledge of the names and claſſes of all the Tropes that can be formed, could be of any advantage towards the proper or graceful uſe of Language. All that I purpoſe is, to give, in a few words, before finiſhing this lecture, a general view of the ſeveral ſources whence the tropical meaning of words is derived; after which I ſhall, in ſubſequent Lectures, deſcend to a more particular conſideration of ſome of the moſt conſiderable Figures of Speech, and ſuch as are in moſt frequent uſe; by treating of which I ſhall give all the inſtruction I can concerning the proper employment of Figurative language, and point out the errors and abuſes which are apt to be committed in this part of Style.

ALL Tropes, as I before obſerved, are founded on the relation which one object bears to another; in virtue of which, the name of the one can be ſubſtituted inſtead of the name of the other; and by ſuch a ſubſtitution, the vivacity of the idea is commonly meant to be increaſed. Theſe relations, ſome more, ſome leſs intimate, may all give riſe to Tropes. One of the firſt and moſt obvious relations is, that between a cauſe and its effect. Hence, in figurative language, the cauſe is ſometimes put for the effect. Thus, Mr. Addiſon, writing of Italy:

Bloſſoms, and fruits, and flowers together riſe,
And the whole year in gay confuſion lies;

where

where the "whole year" is plainly intended to signify the effects or productions of all the ſeaſons of the year. At other times, again, the effect is put for the cauſe; as "grey hairs" frequently for old age, which cauſes grey hairs; and "ſhade," for trees that produce the ſhade. The relation between the container and the thing contained, is alſo ſo intimate and obvious, as naturally to give riſe to Tropes: LECT. XIV.

——— Ille impiger hauſit
Spumantem pateram & pleno ſe proluit auro.

Where every one ſees, that the cup and the gold are put for the liquor that was contained in the golden cup. In the ſame manner, the name of any country is often uſed to denote the inhabitants of that country; and Heaven, very commonly employed to ſignify God, becauſe he is conceived as dwelling in Heaven. To implore the aſſiſtance of Heaven is the ſame as to implore the aſſiſtance of God. The relation betwixt any eſtabliſhed ſign and the thing ſignified, is a further ſource of Tropes. Hence,

Cedant arma togæ; concedat laurea linguæ.

The "toga," being the badge of the civil profeſſions, and the "laurel," of military honours, the badge of each is put for the civil and military characters themſelves. To "aſſume the ſceptre," is a common phraſe for entering on royal authority. To Tropes, founded on theſe ſeveral relations, of

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cauſe and effect, container and contained, ſign and thing ſignified, is given the name of Metonymy.

WHEN the Trope is founded on the relation between an antecedent and a conſequent, or what goes before, and immediately follows, it is then called a Metalepſis; as in the Roman phraſe of "Fuit," or "Vixit," to expreſs that one was dead. "Fuit Ilium et ingens gloria Dardanidum," ſignifies, that the glory of Troy is now no more.

WHEN the whole is put for a part, or a part for the whole; a genus for a ſpecies, or a ſpecies for a genus; the ſingular for the plural, or the plural for the ſingular number; in general, when any thing leſs, or any thing more, is put for the preciſe object meant; the figure is then called a Synecdoche. It is very common, for inſtance, to deſcribe a whole object by ſome remarkable part of it: as, when we ſay, "A fleet of ſo many ſail," in the place of "ſhips;" when we uſe the "head" for the "perſon," the "pole" for the "earth," the "waves" for the "ſea." In like manner an attribute may be put for a ſubject; as "Youth "and Beauty," for "the young and beautiful;" and ſometimes a ſubject for its attribute. But it is needleſs to inſiſt longer on this enumeration, which ſerves little purpoſe. I have ſaid enough to give an opening into that great variety of relations between objects, by means of which, the mind is aſ-

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ſiſted to paſs eaſily from one to another; and by the name of the one underſtands the other to be meant. It is always ſome acceſſory idea, which recals the principal to the imagination; and commonly recals it with more force, than if the principal idea had been expreſſed.

THE relation which is far the moſt fruitful of Tropes, I have not yet mentioned; that is, the relation of Similitude and Reſemblance. On this is founded what is called the Metaphor: when, in place of uſing the proper name of any object we employ, in its place, the name of ſome other which is like it; which is a ſort of picture of it, and which thereby awakens the conception of it, with more force or grace. This Figure is more frequent than all the reſt put together; and the language, both of proſe and verſe, owes to it much of its elegance and grace. This, therefore, deſerves very full and particular conſideration; and ſhall be the ſubject of the next Lecture.

LECTURE XV.

METAPHOR.

LECT. XV. AFTER the preliminary obſervations I have made relating to Figurative language in general, I come now to treat ſeparately of ſuch Figures of Speech as occur moſt frequently, and require particular attention: and I begin with Metaphor. This is a Figure founded entirely on the reſemblance which one object bears to another. Hence, it is much allied to Simile, or Compariſon; and is indeed no other than a compariſon; expreſſed in an abridged form. When I ſay of ſome great miniſter, "that he upholds the ſtate, like a Pillar which "ſupports the weight of a whole edifice," I fairly make a compariſon; but when I ſay of ſuch a miniſter, "that he is the Pillar of the ſtate," it is now become a Metaphor. The compariſon betwixt the Miniſter and a Pillar, is made in the mind; but is expreſſed without any of the words that denote compariſon. The compariſon is only inſinuated, not expreſſed: the one object is ſuppoſed to be ſo

like the other, that, without formally drawing the comparison, the name of the one may be put in the place of the name of the other. "The minister is the Pillar of the state." This, therefore, is a more lively and animated manner of expressing the resemblances which imagination traces among objects. There is nothing which delights the fancy more than this act of compairing things together, discovering resemblances between them, and describing them by their likeness. The mind thus employed, is exercised without being fatigued; and is gratified with the consciousness of its own ingenuity. We need not be surprised, therefore, at finding all Language tinctured strongly with Metaphor. It insinuates itself even into familiar conversation; and, unsought, rises up of its own accord in the mind. The very words which I have casually employed in describing this, are a proof of what I say; *tinctured*, *insinuates*, *rises up*, are all of them metaphorical expressions, borrowed from some resemblance which fancy forms between sensible objects and the internal operations of the mind; and yet the terms are no less clear, and perhaps, more expressive, than if words had been used, which were to be taken in the strict and literal sense. LECT. XV.

THOUGH all Metaphor imports comparison, and, therefore, is, in that respect, a Figure of thought; yet, as the words in a Metaphor are not taken literally, but changed from their proper to a Figurative

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gurative ſenſe, the Metaphor is commonly ranked among Tropes or Figures of words. But, provided the nature of it be well underſtood, it ſignifies very little whether we call it a Figure or a Trope. I have confined it to the expreſſion of reſemblance between two objects. I muſt remark, however, that the word Metaphor is ſometimes uſed in a looſer and more extended ſenſe; for the application of a term in any figurative ſignification, whether the Figure be founded on reſemblance, or on ſome other relation which two objects bear to one another. For inſtance; when grey hairs are put for old age, as, "to bring one's grey hairs "with ſorrow to the grave;" ſome writers would call this a Metaphor, though it is not properly one, but what rhetoricians call a Metonymy; that is, the effect put for the cauſe; "grey hairs" being the effect of old age, but not bearing any ſort of reſemblance to it. Ariſtotle, in his Poetics, uſes Metaphor in this extended ſenſe, for any figurative meaning impoſed upon a word; as a whole put for the part, or a part for the whole; a ſpecies for the genus, or a genus for the ſpecies. But it would be unjuſt to tax this moſt acute writer with any inaccuracy on this account; the minute ſubdiviſions, and various names of Tropes, being unknown in his days, and the invention of later rhetoricians. Now, however, when theſe diviſions are eſtabliſhed, it is inaccurate to call every figurative uſe of terms, promiſcuouſly a Metaphor.

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Of all the Figures of Speech, none comes ſo near to painting as Metaphor. Its peculiar effect is to give light and ſtrength to deſcription; to make intellectual ideas, in ſome ſort, viſible to the eye, by giving them colour, and ſubſtance, and ſenſible qualities. In order to produce this effect, however, a delicate hand is required; for, by a very little inaccuracy, we are in hazard of introducing confuſion, in place of promoting Perſpicuity. Several rules, therefore, are neceſſary to be given for the proper management of Metaphor. But, before entering on theſe, I ſhall give one inſtance of a very beautiful Metaphor, that I may ſhew the Figure to full advantage. I ſhall take my inſtance from Lord Bolingbroke's Remarks on the Hiſtory of England. Juſt at the concluſion of his work, he is ſpeaking of the behaviour of Charles I. to his laſt parliament: "In "a word," ſays he, "about a month after their "meeting, he diſſolved them; and, as ſoon as he "had diſſolved them, he repented; but he re- "pented too late of his raſhneſs. Well might he "repent, for the veſſel was now full, and this laſt "drop made the waters of bitterneſs overflow." "Here," he adds, "we draw the curtain, and "put an end to our remarks." Nothing could be more happily thrown off. The Metaphor, we ſee, is continued through ſeveral expreſſions. The *veſſel* is put for the ſtate or temper of the nation already *full*, that is, provoked to the higheſt by former oppreſſions and wrongs; this *laſt drop*, ſtands for the

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On this paſſage we may make two remarks in paſſing. The one, that nothing forms a more ſpirited and dignified concluſion of a ſubject, than a Figure of this kind happily placed at the cloſe. We ſee the effect of it in this inſtance. The author goes off with a good grace; and leaves a ſtrong and full impreſſion of his ſubject on the reader's mind. My other remark is, the advantage which a Metaphor frequently has above a formal compariſon. How much would the ſentiment here have been enfeebled, if it had been expreſſed in the ſtyle of a regular ſimile, thus: "Well might he repent; for the ſtate of the nation, loaded with grievances and provocation, reſembled a veſſel that was now full, and this ſuperadded provocation, like the laſt drop infuſed, made their rage and ſentiment, as waters of bitterneſs, overflow." It has infinitely more ſpirit and force as it now ſtands, in the form of a Metaphor. "Well might he repent; for the veſſel was now full; and this laſt drop made the waters of bitterneſs overflow."

Having mentioned, with applauſe, this inſtance from Lord Bolingbroke, I think it incumbent on me

me here to take notice, that though I may have recourſe to this author, ſometimes, for examples of ſtyle, it is his ſtyle only, and not his ſentiments, that deſerve praiſe. It is, indeed, my opinion, that there are few writings in the Engliſh Language, which, for the matter contained in them, can be read with leſs profit or fruit than Lord Bolingbroke's works. His political writings have the merit of a very lively and eloquent ſtyle; but they have no other; being, as to the ſubſtance, the mere temporary productions of faction and party; no better, indeed, than pamphlets written for the day. His Poſthumous, or as they are called, his Philoſophical Works, wherein he attacks religion, have ſtill leſs merit; for they are as looſe in the ſtyle as they are flimſy in the reaſoning. An unhappy inſtance, this author is, of parts and genius ſo miſerably perverted by faction and paſſion, that as his memory will deſcend to poſterity with little honour, ſo his productions will ſoon paſs, and are, indeed, already paſſing into neglect and oblivion. LECT. XV.

RETURNING from this digreſſion to the ſubject before us, I proceed to lay down the rules to be obſerved in the conduct of Metaphors; and which are much the ſame for Tropes of every kind.

THE firſt which I ſhall mention, is, that they be ſuited to the nature of the ſubject of which we treat: neither too many, nor too gay; nor too elevated for it; that we neither attempt to force

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force the ſubject, by means of them, into a degree of elevation which is not congruous to it; nor, on the other hand, allow it to ſink below its proper dignity. This is a direction which belongs to all Figurative language, and ſhould be ever kept in view. Some metaphors are allowable, nay beautiful in poetry, which it would be abſurd and unnatural to employ in proſe; ſome may be graceful in orations, which would be very improper in hiſtorical or philoſophical compoſition. We muſt remember that Figures are the dreſs of our ſentiments. As there is a natural congruity between dreſs and the character or rank of the perſon who wears it, a violation of which congruity never fails to hurt; the ſame holds preciſely as to the application of Figures to ſentiment. The exceſſive or unſeaſonable employment of them is mere foppery in writing. It gives a boyiſh air to compoſition; and, inſtead of raiſing a ſubject, in fact, diminiſhes its dignity. For, as in life, true dignity muſt be founded on character, not on dreſs and appearance, ſo the dignity of compoſition muſt ariſe from ſentiment and thought, not from ornament. The affectation and parade of ornament, detract as much from an author, as they do from a man. Figures and Metaphors, therefore, ſhould, on no occaſion, be ſtuck on too profuſely; and never ſhould be ſuch as refuſe to accord with the ſtrain of our ſentiment. Nothing can be more unnatural, than for a writer to carry on a ſtrain of reaſoning, in the ſame ſort of Figurative language which he would uſe in deſcription. When he reaſons, we look only

only for perſpicuity; when he deſcribes, we expect embelliſhment; when he divides, or relates, we deſire plainneſs and ſimplicity. One of the greateſt ſecrets in compoſition is, to know when to be ſimple. This always gives a heightening to ornament, in its proper place. The right diſpoſition of the ſhade makes the light and colouring ſtrike the more: "Is enim eſt eloquens," ſays Cicero, "qui et humilia ſubtiliter, et magna graviter, et "mediocria temperatè, poteſt dicere.—Nam qui "nihil poteſt tranquillè, nihil leniter, nihil definitè, "diſtinctè, poteſt dicere, is, cum non præparatis "auribus inflammare rem cæpit, furere apud ſanos, "et quaſi inter ſobrios bacchari temulentus vide-"tur *." This admonition ſhould be particularly attended to by young practitioners in the art of writing, who are apt to be carried away by an undiſtinguiſhing admiration of what is ſhowy and florid, whether in its place or not †. LECT. XV.

THE

* "He is truly eloquent who can diſcourſe of humble ſub-"jects in a plain ſtyle, who can treat important ones with dig-"nity, and ſpeak of things which are of a middle nature, in a "temperate ſtrain. For one who, upon no occaſion, can ex-"preſs himſelf in a calm, orderly, diſtinct manner, when he "begins to be on fire before his readers are prepared to kindle "along with him, has the appearance of raving like a madman "among perſons who are in their ſenſes, or of reeling like a "drunkard, in the midſt of ſober company."

† What perſon of the leaſt taſte can bear the following paſſage in a late hiſtorian? He is giving an account of the famous act of parliament againſt irregular Marriages in England: "The "bill,"

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THE ſecond rule which I give, reſpects the choice of objects from whence Metaphors, and other Figures, are to be drawn. The field for Figurative Language is very wide. All nature, to ſpeak in the ſtyle of Figures, opens its ſtores to us, and admits us to gather, from all ſenſible objects, whatever can illuſtrate intellectual or moral ideas. Not only the gay and ſplendid objects of ſenſe, but the grave, the terrifying, and even the gloomy and diſmal, may, on different occaſions, be introduced into Figures with propriety. But we muſt beware of ever uſing ſuch alluſions as raiſe in the mind diſagreeable, mean, vulgar, or dirty ideas. Even when Metaphors are choſen in order to vilify and degrade any object, an author ſhould ſtudy never to be naufeous in his alluſions. Cicero blames an orator of his time, for terming his enemy "Ster-"cus Curiæ;" "quamvis ſit ſimile," ſays he, "tamen eſt deformis cogitatio ſimilitudinis." But, in ſubjects of dignity it is an unpardonable fault to

"bill," ſays he, "underwent a great number of alterations "and amendments, which were not effected without violent "conteſt." This is plain language ſuited to the ſubject; and we naturally expect, that, he ſhould go on in the ſame ſtrain, to tell us, that after theſe conteſts, it was carried by a great majority of voices, and obtained the royal aſſent. But how does he expreſs himſelf in finiſhing the period; "At "length, however, it was floated through both houſes on the "tide of a great majority, and ſteered into the ſafe harbour of "royal approbation." Nothing can be more puerile than ſuch Language. Smollet's Hiſtory of England, as quoted in Critical Review for Oct. 1761, p. 251.

introduce

introduce mean and vulgar Metaphors. In the treatiſe on the Art of Sinking, in Dean Swift's works, there is a full and humorous collection of inſtances of this kind, wherein authors, inſtead of of exalting, have contrived to degrade their ſubjects by they Figures they employed. Authors of greater note than thoſe which are there quoted, have at times fallen into this error. Archbiſhop Tillotſon, for inſtance, is ſometimes negligent in his choice of Metaphors; as, when ſpeaking of the day of Judgment, he deſcribes the world, as "cracking about the ſinners ears." Shakeſpeare, whoſe imagination was rich and bold, in a much greater degree than it was delicate, often fails here. The following, for example, is a groſs tranſgreſſion; in his Henry V., having mentioned a dung-hill, he preſently raiſes a Metaphor from the ſteam of it; and on a ſubject too, that naturally led to much nobler ideas: LECT. XV.

> And thoſe that leave their valiant bones in France,
> Dying like men, though buried in your dunghills,
> They ſhall be famed; for there the ſun ſhall greet them,
> And draw their honours reeking up to heaven.
>
> Act. IV. Sc. 8.

In the third place, as Metaphors ſhould be drawn from objects of ſome dignity, ſo particular care ſhould be taken that the reſemblance, which is the foundation of the Metaphor, be clear and perſpicuous, not far-fetched, nor difficult to diſcover.

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cover. The tranſgreſſion of this rule makes, what are called harſh or forced Metaphors, which are always diſpleaſing, becauſe they puzzle the reader, and inſtead of illuſtrating the thought, render it perplexed and intricate. With Metaphors of this kind Cowley abounds. He, and ſome of the writers of his age, ſeemed to have conſidered it as the perfection of wit, to hit upon likeneſſes between objects which no other perſon could have diſcovered; and, at the ſame time, to purſue thoſe Metaphors ſo far, that it requires ſome ingenuity to follow them out, and comprehend them. This makes a Metaphor reſemble an ænigma; and is the very reverſe of Cicero's rule on this head: "Verecunda debet eſſe tranſlatio; ut deducta eſſe "in alienum locum non irruiſſe, atque ut volun- "tario non vi veniſſe videatur *." How forced and obſcure, for inſtance, are the following verſes of Cowley, ſpeaking of his miſtreſs:

Wo to her ſtubborn heart, if once mine come
Into the ſelf-ſame room,
'Twill tear and blow up all within,
Like a granada ſhot into a magazine.
Then ſhall love keep the aſhes and torn parts
Of both our broken hearts;

* "Every Metaphor ſhould be modeſt, ſo that it may carry "the appearance of having been led, not of having forced "itſelf, into the place of that word whoſe room it occupies; "that it may ſeem to have come thither of its own accord, and "not by conſtraint." De Oratore, lib. iii. c. 53.

Shall

Shall out of both one new one make;
From her's th' alloy, from mine the metal take;
For of her heart, he from the flames will find
But little left behind:
Mine only will remain entire,
No droſs was there to periſh in the fire.

In this manner he addreſſes Sleep:

In vain, thou drowſy God, I thee invoke,
For thou who doſt from fumes ariſe,
Thou who man's ſoul doſt overſhade
With a thick cloud by vapours made;
Canſt have no power to ſhut his eyes,
Whoſe flame's ſo pure, that it ſends up no ſmoke:
Yet how do tears but from ſome vapours riſe,
Tears that bewinter all my year;
The fate of Egypt I ſuſtain,
And never feel the dew of rain,
From clouds which in the head appear:
But all my too much moiſture owe
To overflowings of the heart below *.

Trite and common reſemblances ſhould indeed be avoided in our Metaphors. To be new, and not vulgar, is a beauty. But when they are fetched from ſome likeneſs too remote, and lying too far out of the road of ordinary thought, then, beſides their obſcurity, they have alſo the diſadvantage of appearing laboured, and, as the French call it,

* See an excellent criticiſm on this ſort of metaphyſical poetry, in Dr. Johnſon's Life of Cowley.

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"recherché:" whereas Metaphor, like every other ornament, loſes its whole grace, when it does not ſeem natural and eaſy.

It is but a bad and ungraceful ſoftening, which writers ſometimes uſe for a harſh Metaphor, when they palliate it with the expreſſion, *as it were*. This is but an awkward parentheſis; and Metaphors, which need this apology of an *as it were*, would, generally, have been better omitted. Metaphors, too, borrowed from any of the ſciences, eſpecially ſuch of them as belong to particular profeſſions, are almoſt always faulty by their obſcurity.

In the fourth place, it muſt be carefully attended to, in the conduct of Metaphors, never to jumble metaphorical and plain language together; never to conſtruct a period ſo, that part of it muſt be underſtood metaphorically, part literally: which always produces a moſt diſagreeable confuſion. Inſtances, which are but too frequent, even in good authors, will make this rule, and the reaſon of it, be clearly underſtood. In Mr. Pope's tranſlation of the Odyſſey, Penelope, bewailing the abrupt departure of her ſon Telemachus, is made to ſpeak thus:

> Long to my joys my deareſt Lord is loſt,
> His country's buckler, and the Grecian boaſt;

Now

Now from my fond embrace by tempests torn,
Our other column of the state is borne,
Nor took a kind adieu, nor sought consent *.

IV. 962.

Here, in one line, her son is figured as a Column; and in the next, he returns to be a Person, to whom it belongs to take adieu, and to ask consent. This is inconsistent. The Poet should either have kept himself to the idea of Man, in the literal sense; or, if he figured him by a Column, he should have ascribed nothing to him but what belonged to it. He was not at liberty to ascribe to that Column the actions and properties of a Man. Such unnatural mixtures render the image indistinct; leaving it to waver, in our conception, between the figurative and the literal sense. Horace's rule, which he applies to Characters, should be observed by all writers who deal in Figures:

—— Servetur ad imum,
Qualis ab incepto processerit, et sibi constet.

Mr. Pope, elsewhere, addressing himself to the King, says,

* In the original, there is no allusion to a Column, and the Metaphor is regularly supported:

Ἠ πριν μεν πόσιν ἐσθλον ἀπώμεσα θυμολεοντα
Παντοιης ἀρετῆσι κεκασμενον ἐν Δαναοισι
Εσθλον, τȣ̀ κλεος ἐυρυ καθ' Ἑλλαδα και μεσον Ἀργος
Νυν δ' αυ παιδ' αγαπητον ανηρειψαντο θυελλαι
Ἀκλεα ἐκ μεγαρων, ȣ̀δ' ὀρμηθεντος ακȣσα. Δ. 734.

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To thee the world its preſent homage pays,
The harveſt early, but mature the praiſe.

This, though not ſo groſs, is a fault, however, of the ſame kind. It is plain, that, had not the rhyme miſled him to the choice of an improper phraſe, he would have ſaid,

The harveſt early, but mature the crop:

And ſo would have continued the Figure which he had begun. Whereas, by dropping it unfiniſhed, and by employing the literal word, *praiſe*, when we were expecting ſomething that related to the Harveſt, the Figure is broken, and the two members of the ſentence have no proper correſpondence with each other:

The *Harveſt* early, but mature the *Praiſe*.

THE Works of Oſſian abound with beautiful and correct Metaphors: ſuch as that on a Hero: "In "peace, thou art the Gale of Spring; in war, the "Mountain Storm." Or this, on a Woman: "She was covered with the Light of Beauty; but "her heart was the Houſe of Pride." They afford, however, one inſtance of the fault we are now cenſuring: "Trothal went forth with the "Stream of his people, but they met a Rock: "for Fingal ſtood unmoved; broken they rolled "back from his ſide: nor did they roll in ſafety; "the ſpear of the King purſued their flight." At the beginning, the Metaphor is very beautiful.

The

The Stream, the unmoved Rock, the Waves rolling back broken, are expreſſions employed in the proper and conſiſtent Language of Figure; but in the end, when we are told, "they did not roll "in ſafety, becauſe the ſpear of the King purſued "their flight," the literal meaning is improperly mixed with the Metaphor; they are, at one and the ſame time, preſented to us as *waves* that *roll*, and men that may be *purſued* and *wounded with a ſpear*. If it be faulty to jumble together, in this manner, metaphorical and plain language, it is ſtill more ſo, SECT. XV.

In the fifth place, to make two different Metaphors meet on one object. This is what is called Mixed Metaphor, and is indeed one of the groſſeſt abuſes of this Figure; ſuch as Shakeſpeare's expreſſion, "to take arms againſt a ſea "of troubles." This makes a moſt unnatural medley, and confounds the imagination entirely. Quinctilian has ſufficiently guarded us againſt it. "Id imprimis eſt cuſtodiendum, ut quo genere "cœperis tranſlationis, hoc finias. Multi autem "cùm initium a tempeſtate ſumſerunt, incendio "aut ruina finiunt; quæ eſt inconſequentia rerum "fœdiſſima*." Obſerve, for inſtance, what an

* "We muſt be particularly attentive to end with the ſame "kind of Metaphor with which we have begun. Some, when "they begin the figure with a Tempeſt, conclude it with a "Conflagration; which forms a ſhameful inconſiſtency."

LECT. XV. inconſiſtent groupe of objects is brought together by Shakeſpeare, in the following paſſage of the Tempeſt; ſpeaking of perſons recovering their judgment after the enchantment, which held them, was diſſolved:

> —— The charm diſſolves apace,
> And as the morning ſteals upon the night
> Melting the darkneſs, ſo their riſing ſenſes
> Begin to chaſe the ignorant fumes that mantle
> Their clearer reaſon. ——

So many ill-ſorted things are here joined, that the mind can ſee nothing clearly; the morning *ſtealing* upon the darkneſs, and at the ſame time *melting* it; the ſenſes of men *chaſing fumes*, *ignorant fumes* and *fumes* that *mantle*. So again in Romeo and Juliet:

> —— as glorious,
> As is a winged meſſenger from heaven,
> Unto the white upturn'd wondering eyes
> Of mortals, that fall back to gaze on him,
> When he beſtrides the lazy-pacing clouds,
> And ſails upon the boſom of the air.

Here, the angel is repreſentd as, at one moment, *beſtriding* the clouds, and *ſailing* upon the air; and upon the *boſom* of the air too; which forms ſuch a confuſed picture, that it is impoſſible for any imagination to comprehend it.

More correct writers than Shakeſpeare ſometimes fall into this error of mixing Metaphors. It

It is ſurpriſing how the following inaccuracy ſhould have eſcaped Mr. Addiſon in his letter from Italy: LECT. XV.

> I bridle in my ſtruggling muſe with pain,
> That longs to launch into a bolder ſtrain *.

The muſe, figured as a horſe, may be *bridled*; but when we ſpeak of *launching*, we make it a ſhip; and by no force of imagination, can it be ſuppoſed both a horſe and a ſhip at one moment; *bridled*, to hinder it from *launching*. The ſame Author in one of his Numbers in the Spectator, ſays, "There is not a ſingle view of human "nature, which is not ſufficient to extinguiſh the "ſeeds of Pride." Obſerve the incoherence of the things here joined together, making "a view "extinguiſh, and extinguiſh ſeeds."

HORACE, alſo, is incorrect, in the following paſſage:

> Urit enim fulgore ſuo qui pregravat artes
> Infra ſe poſitas.——

Urit qui *pregravat*.—He dazzles who bears down with his weight; makes plainly an inconſiſtent mixture of metaphorical ideas. Neither can this other paſſage be altogether vindicated:

* In my obſervation on this paſſage, I find, that I had coincided with Dr. Johnſon, who paſſes a ſimilar cenſure upon it in his life of Addiſon.

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Ah! quantâ laboras in Charybdi,
Digne puer, meliore flammâ!

Where a whirlpool of water, Charybdis, is ſaid to be a flame, not good enough for this young man; meaning, that he was unfortunate in the object of his paſſion. Flame is, indeed, become almoſt a literal word for the paſſion of love; but as it ſtill retains, in ſome degree, its figurative power, it ſhould never have been uſed as ſynonymous with water, and mixed with it in the ſame Metaphor. When Mr. Pope (Eloiſa to Abelard) ſays,

All then is full, poſſeſſing and poſſeſt,
No craving void left aking in the breaſt;

A *void* may, metaphorically, be ſaid to *crave*; but can a void be ſaid to *ake*?

A good rule has been given for examining the propriety of Metaphors, when we doubt whether or not they be of the mixed kind; namely, that we ſhould try to form a picture upon them, and conſider how the parts would agree, and what ſort of figure the whole would preſent, when delineated with a pencil. By this means we ſhould become ſenſible, whether inconſiſtent circumſtances were mixed, and a monſtrous image thereby produced, as in all thoſe faulty inſtances I have now been giving; or whether the object was, all along, preſented in one natural and conſiſtent point of view.

As

As Metaphors ought never to be mixed, ſo, in the ſixth place, we ſhould avoid crowding them together on the ſame object. Suppoſing each of the Metaphors to be preſerved diſtinct, yet, if they be heaped on one another, they produce a confuſion ſomewhat of the ſame kind with the mixed Metaphor. We may judge of this by the following paſſage from Horace: LECT. XV.

Motum ex Metello conſule civicum,
Bellique cauſas, et vitia, et modos,
Ludumque fortunæ, graveſque
Principum amicitias, & arma
Nondum expiatis uncta cruoribus,
Periculoſæ plenum opus aleæ
Tractas, et incedis per ignes
Suppoſitos cineri doloſo *. Lib. II. 1.

This paſſage, though very poetical, is, however, harſh and obſcure; owing to no other cauſe but this, that three diſtinct Metaphors are crowded

* Of warm commotions, wrathful jars,
The growing ſeeds of civil wars;
Of double fortune's cruel games,
The ſpecious means, the private aims,
And fatal friendſhips of the guilty great,
Alas! how fatal to the Roman ſtate!
Of mighty legions late ſubdu'd,
And arms with Latian blood embru'd;
Yet unatoned, (a labour vaſt
Doubtful the die, and dire the caſt!)
You treat adventurous, and incautious tread
On fires with faithleſs embers overſpread. FRANCIS.

together,

LECT. XV.

together, to deſcribe the difficulty of Pollio's writing a hiſtory of the civil wars, Firſt, "Tractas arma "uncta cruoribus nondum expiatis;" next, "Opus "plenum periculoſæ aleæ;" and then, "Incedis "per ignes, ſuppoſitos doloſo cineri." The mind has difficulty in paſſing readily through ſo many different views given it, in quick ſucceſſion, of the ſame object.

THE only other rule concerning Metaphors, which I ſhall add, in the ſeventh place, is, that they be not too far purſued. If the reſemblance on which the Figure is founded, be long dwelt upon, and carried into all its minute circumſtances, we make an allegory inſtead of a Metaphor; we tire the reader, who ſoon becomes weary of this play of fancy; and we render our diſcourſe obſcure. This is called, ſtraining a Metaphor. Cowley deals in this to exceſs; and to this error is owing, in a great meaſure, that intricacy and harſhneſs, in his figurative Language, which I before remarked. Lord Shaftſbury is ſometimes guilty of purſuing his Metaphors too far. Fond, to a high degree, of every decoration of ſtyle, when once he had hit upon a Figure that pleaſed him, he was extremely loth to part with it. Thus, in his Advice to an Author, having taken up ſoliloquy, or meditation, under the Metaphor of a proper method of evacuation for an author, he purſues this Metaphor through ſeveral pages, under all the forms "of diſcharging crudities, throwing off "froth

" froth and ſcum, bodily operation, taking phyſic, LECT. XV.
" curing indigeſtion, giving vent to choler, bile,
" flatulencies, and tumours;" till, at laſt, the idea becomes nauſeous. Dr. Young alſo often treſpaſſes in the ſame way. The merit, however, of this writer in figurative Language is great, and deſerves to be remarked. No writer, ancient or modern, had a ſtronger imagination than Dr. Young, or one more fertile in Figures of every kind. His Metaphors are often new, and often natural and beautiful. But his imagination was ſtrong and rich, rather than delicate and correct. Hence, in his Night Thoughts, there prevails an obſcurity, and a hardneſs in his ſtyle. The Metaphors are frequently too bold, and frequently too far purſued; the reader is dazzled rather than enlightened; and kept conſtantly on the ſtretch to keep pace with the author. We may obſerve, for inſtance, how the following Metaphor is ſpun out:

Thy thoughts are vagabond; all outward-bound,
Midſt ſands and rocks, and ſtorms, to cruiſe for pleaſure;
If gain'd, dear bought; and better miſs'd than gain'd.
Fancy and ſenſe, from an infected ſhore,
Thy cargo brings; and peſtilence the prize;
Then ſuch the thirſt, inſatiable thirſt,
By fond indulgence but inflam'd the more,
Fancy ſtill cruiſes, when poor ſenſe is tired.

Speaking of old age, he ſays it ſhould

Walk thoughtful on the ſilent ſolemn ſhore
Of that vaſt ocean, it muſt ſail ſo ſoon:

And

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And put good works on board; and wait the wind
That ſhortly blows us into worlds unknown.

THE two firſt lines are uncommonly beautiful; "walk thoughtful on the ſilent," &c. but when he continues the Metaphor, "to putting good works "on board, and waiting the wind," it plainly becomes ſtrained, and ſinks in dignity. Of all the Engliſh authors, I know none ſo happy in his Metaphors as Mr. Addiſon. His imagination was neither ſo rich nor ſo ſtrong as Dr. Young's; but far more chaſte and delicate. Perſpicuity, natural grace, and eaſe, always diſtinguiſh his Figures. They are neither harſh nor ſtrained; they never appear to have been ſtudied or ſought after; but ſeem to riſe of their own accord from the ſubject, and conſtantly embelliſh it.

I HAVE now treated fully of the Metaphor, and the rules that ſhould govern it; a part of ſtyle ſo important, that it required particular illuſtration. I have only to add a few words concerning Allegory.

AN Allegory may be regarded as a continued Metaphor; as it is the repreſentation of ſome one thing by another that reſembles it; and that is made to ſtand for it. Thus, in Prior's Henry and Emma, Emma in the following allegorical manner deſcribes her conſtancy to Henry:

Did

LECT. XV.

Did I but purpoſe to embark with thee
On the ſmooth ſurface of a ſummer's ſea,
While gentle zephyrs play with proſp'rous gales,
And fortune's favour fills the ſwelling ſails,
But would forſake the ſhip, and make the ſhore,
When the winds whiſtle, and the tempeſts roar?

We may take alſo from the Scriptures a very fine example of an Allegory, in the 80th Pſalm; where the people of Iſrael are repreſented under the image of a vine, and the Figure is ſupported throughout with great correctneſs and beauty: "Thou haſt brought a vine out of Egypt, thou "haſt caſt out the heathen, and planted it. Thou "preparedſt room before it, and didſt cauſe it to "take deep root, and it filled the land. The "hills were covered with the ſhadow of it; and "the boughs thereof were like the goodly cedars. "She ſent out her boughs into the ſea, and her "branches into the river. Why haſt thou broken "down her hedges, ſo that all they which paſs by "the way do pluck her? The boar out of the "wood doth waſte it; and the wild beaſt of the "field doth devour it. Return, we beſeech thee, "O God of Hoſts; look down from Heaven, and "behold, and viſit this vine!" Here there is no circumſtance (except perhaps one phraſe at the beginning, "thou haſt caſt out the heathen") that does not ſtrictly agree to a vine, whilſt at the ſame time the whole quadrates happily with the Jewiſh ſtate repreſented by this Figure. This is the firſt and principal requiſite in the conduct of an Allegory,

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gory, that the figurative and the literal meaning be not mixed inconſiſtently together. For inſtance, inſtead of deſcribing the vine, as waſted by the boar from the wood and devoured by the wild beaſt of the field, had the Pſalmiſt ſaid, it was afflicted by heathens, or overcome by enemies (which is the real meaning), this would have ruined the Allegory, and produced the ſame confuſion, of which I gave examples in Metaphors, when the figurative and literal ſenſe are mixed and jumbled together. Indeed, the ſame rules that were given for Metaphors, may alſo be applied to Allegories, on account of the affinity they bear to each other. The only material difference between them, beſides the one being ſhort, and the other being prolonged, is, that a Metaphor always explains itſelf by the words that are connected with it in their proper and natural meaning; as when I ſay, "Achilles was a Lion:" an "able Miniſter "is the Pillar of the ſtate;" my Lion and my Pillar are ſufficiently interpreted by the mention of Achilles and the Miniſter, which I join to them: but an Allegory is, or may be, allowed to ſtand more diſconnected with the literal meaning; the interpretation not ſo directly pointed out, but left to our own reflection.

ALLEGORIES were a favourite method of delivering inſtructions in ancient times; for what we call Fables or Parables are no other than Allegories; where, by words and actions attributed to beaſts

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or inanimate objects, the diſpoſitions of men are figured; and what we call the moral, is the unfigured ſenſe or meaning of the Allegory. An Ænigma or Riddle is alſo a ſpecies of Allegory; one thing repreſented or imagined by another, but purpoſely wrapt up under ſo many circumſtances, as to be rendered obſcure. Where a riddle is not intended, it is always a fault in Allegory to be too dark. The meaning ſhould be eaſily ſeen through the figure employed to ſhadow it. However, the proper mixture of light and ſhade in ſuch compoſitions, the exact adjuſtment of all the figurative circumſtances with the literal ſenſe, ſo as neither to lay the meaning too bare and open, nor to cover and wrap it up too much, has ever been found an affair of great nicety; and there are few ſpecies of compoſition in which it is more difficult to write ſo as to pleaſe and command attention, than in Allegories. In ſome of the viſions of the Spectator, we have examples of Allegories very happily executed.

LECTURE XVI.

HYPERBOLE — PERSONIFICATION — APOSTROPHE.

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THE next Figure concerning which I am to treat is called Hyperbole, or Exaggeration. It conſiſts in magnifying an object beyond its natural bounds. It may be conſidered ſometimes as a Trope, and ſometimes as a Figure of thought: and here indeed the diſtinction between theſe two claſſes begins not to be clear, nor is it of any importance that we ſhould have recourſe to metaphyſical ſubtilties, in order to keep them diſtinct. Whether we call it Trope or Figure, it is plain that it is a mode of ſpeech which hath ſome foundation in nature. For in all languages, even in common converſation, hyperbolical expreſſions very frequently occur; as ſwift as the wind; as white as the ſnow; and the like: and our common forms of compliment are almoſt all of them extravagant Hyperboles. If any thing be remarkably good or great in its kind, we are inſtantly ready to add to it ſome exaggerating epithet; and

to make it the greateſt or beſt we ever ſaw. The imagination has always a tendency to gratify itſelf, by magnifying its preſent object, and carrying it to exceſs. More or leſs of this hyperbolical turn will prevail in language, according to the livelineſs of imagination among the people who ſpeak it. Hence young people deal always much in Hyperboles. Hence the language of the Orientals was far more hyperbolical than that of the Europeans, who are of more phlegmatic, or, if you pleaſe, of more correct imagination. Hence, among all writers in early times, and in the rude periods of ſociety, we may expect this Figure to abound. Greater experience, and more cultivated ſociety, abate the warmth of imagination, and chaſten the manner of expreſſion. LECT. XVI

THE exaggerated expreſſions to which our ears are accuſtomed in converſation, ſcarcely ſtrike us as Hyperboles. In an inſtant we make the proper abatement, and underſtand them according to their juſt value. But when there is ſomething ſtriking and unuſual in the form of a hyperbolical expreſſion, it then riſes into a Figure of Speech which draws our attention: and here it is neceſſary to obſerve, that unleſs the reader's imagination be in ſuch a ſtate as diſpoſes it to riſe and ſwell along with the hyperbolical expreſſion, he is always hurt and offended by it. For a ſort of diſagreeable force is put upon him; he is required to ſtrain and exert his fancy, when he feels no inclination to make any ſuch effort. Hence the Hyperbole is a

LECT. XVI. Figure of difficult management; and ought neither to be frequently uſed, nor long dwelt upon. On ſome occaſions, it is undoubtedly proper, being, as was before obſerved, the natural ſtyle of a ſprightly and heated imagination; but when Hyperboles are unſeaſonable, or too frequent, they render a compoſition frigid and unaffecting. They are the reſource of an author of feeble imagination; of one, deſcribing objects which either want native dignity in themſelves; or whoſe dignity he cannot ſhew by deſcribing them ſimply, and in their juſt proportions, and is therefore obliged to reſt upon tumid and exaggerated expreſſions.

HYBERBOLES are of two kinds; either ſuch as are employed in deſcription, or ſuch as are ſuggeſted by the warmth of paſſion. The beſt by far, are thoſe which are the effect of paſſion: for if the imagination has a tendency to magnify its objects beyond their natural proportion, paſſion poſſeſſes this tendency in a vaſtly ſtronger degree; and therefore not only excuſes the moſt daring Figures, but very often renders them natural and juſt. All paſſions, without exception, love, terror, amazement, indignation, anger, and even grief, throw the mind into confuſion, aggravate their objects, and of courſe prompt a hyperbolical ſtyle. Hence the following ſentiments of Satan in Milton, as ſtrongly as they are deſcribed, contain nothing but what is natural and proper; exhibiting the picture of a mind agitated with rage and deſpair:

Me,

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Me, miſerable! which way ſhall I flie
Infinite wrath, and infinite deſpair?
Which way I flie is Hell, myſelf am Hell,
And in the loweſt depth, a lower deep,
Still threat'ning to devour me, opens wide,
To which the Hell I ſuffer ſeems a Heaven.
B. iv. l. 73.

In ſimple deſcription, though Hyperboles are not excluded, yet they muſt be uſed with more caution, and require more preparation, in order to make the mind reliſh them. Either the object deſcribed muſt be of that kind, which of itſelf ſeizes the fancy ſtrongly, and diſpoſes it to run beyond bounds; ſomething vaſt, ſurpriſing, and new, or the writer's art muſt be exerted in heating the fancy gradually, and preparing it to think highly of the object which he intends to exaggerate. When a poet is deſcribing an earthquake or a ſtorm, or when he has brought us into the midſt of a battle, we can bear ſtrong Hyperboles without diſpleaſure. But when he is deſcribing only a woman in grief, it is impoſſible not to be diſguſted with ſuch wild exaggeration as the following, in one of our dramatic poets:

——I found her on the floor
In all the ſtorm of grief, yet beautiful;
Pouring forth tears at ſuch a laviſh rate,
That were the world on fire, they might have drown'd
The wrath of Heaven, and quench'd the mighty ruin.
Lee.

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THIS is mere bombaſt. The perſon herſelf who was under the diſtracting agitations of grief, might be permitted to hyperbolize ſtrongly; but the ſpectator deſcribing her, cannot be allowed an equal liberty: for this plain reaſon, that the one is ſuppoſed to utter the ſentiments of paſſion, the other ſpeaks only the language of deſcription, which is always according to the dictates of nature, on a lower tone: a diſtinction which, however obvious, has not been attended to by many writers.

How far a Hyperbole, ſuppoſing it properly introduced, may be ſafely carried without overſtretching it; what is the proper meaſure and boundary of this Figure, cannot, as far as I know, be aſcertained by any preciſe rule. Good ſenſe and juſt taſte muſt determine the point, beyond which, if we paſs, we become extravagant. Lucan may be pointed out as an author apt to be exceſſive in his Hyperboles. Among the compliments paid by the Roman Poets to their Emperors, it had become faſhionable to aſk them, what part of the heavens they would chuſe for their habitation, after they ſhould have become Gods? Virgil had already carried this ſufficiently far in his addreſs to Auguſtus:

——Tibi brachia contrahit ingens
Scorpius, & Cœli juſta plus parte relinquit *.

GEOR. I.

* "The Scorpion ready to receive thy laws,
"Yields half his region, and contracts his paws."

But

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But this did not ſuffice Lucan. Reſolved to outdo all his predeceſſors, in a like addreſs to Nero, he very gravely beſeeches him not to chuſe his place near either of the poles, but to be ſure to occupy juſt the middle of the heavens, leſt, by going either to one ſide or other, his weight ſhould overſet the univerſe:

Sed neque in Arctoo ſedem tibi legeris orbe
Nec polus adverſi calidus qua mergitur auſtri:
Ætheris immenſi partem ſi preſſeris unam
Sentiet axis onus. Librati pondera Cœli
Orbe tene medio *.——— PHARS. I. 53.

Such thoughts as theſe, are what the French call *outrés*, and always proceed from a falſe fire of genius. The Spaniſh and African writers, as Tertullian, Cyprian, Auguſtin, are remarked for being fond of them. As in that epitaph on Charles V. by a Spaniſh writer:

Pro tumulo ponas orbem, pro tegmine cœlum,
Sidera pro facibus, pro lacrymis maria.

---

* But, oh! whatever be thy Godhead great,
Fix not in regions too remote thy ſeat;
Nor deign thou near the frozen Bear to ſhine,
Nor where the ſultry ſouthern ſtars decline.
Preſs not too much on any part the ſphere.
Hard were the taſk thy weight divine to bear;
Soon would the axis feel the unuſual load,
And, groaning, bend beneath th' incumbent God;
O'er the mid orb more equal ſhalt thou riſe,
And with a juſter balance fix the ſkies. ROWE.

LECT. XVI. Sometimes they dazzle and impoſe by their boldneſs; but wherever reaſon and good ſenſe are ſo much violated, there can be no true beauty. Epigrammatic writers are frequently guilty in this reſpect; reſting the whole merit of their epigrams on ſome extravagant hyperbolical turn; ſuch as the following of Dr. Pitcairn's, upon Holland's being gained from the ocean:

Tellurem fecere Dii; ſua littora Belgæ;
Immenſæque molis opus utrumque fuit;
Dii vacuo ſparſas glomerârunt æthere terras,
Nil ibi quod operi poſſit obeſſe fuit.
At Belgis, maria & cœli naturaque rerum
Obſtitit; obſtantes hi domuêre Deos.

So much for the Hyberbole. We proceed now to thoſe Figures which lie altogether in the thought; where the words are taken in their common and literal ſenſe.

Among theſe, the firſt place is unqueſtionably due to Perſonification, or that Figure by which we attribute life and action to inanimate objects. The technical term for this is Proſopopœia: but as Perſonification is of the ſame import, and more allied to our own language, it will be better to uſe this word.

It is a Figure, the uſe of which is very extenſive, and its foundation laid deep in human nature. At firſt view, and when conſidered abſtractly, it would

would appear to be a Figure of the utmoſt boldneſs, and to border on the extravagant and ridiculous. For what can ſeem more remote from the track of reaſonable thought, than to ſpeak of ſtones and trees, and fields and rivers, as if they were living creatures, and to attribute to them thought and ſenſation, affections and actions? One might imagine this to be no more than childiſh conceit, which no perſon of taſte could reliſh. In fact, however, the caſe is very different. No ſuch ridiculous effect is produced by Perſonification, when properly employed; on the contrary, it is found to be natural and agreeable; nor is any very uncommon degree of paſſion required, in order to make us reliſh it. All poetry, even in its moſt gentle and humble forms, abounds with it. From proſe, it is far from being excluded; nay, in common converſation, very frequent approaches are made to it. When we ſay, the ground *thirſts* for rain, or the earth *ſmiles* with plenty; when we ſpeak of ambition's being *reſtleſs*, or a diſeaſe being *deceitful*, ſuch expreſſions ſhew the facility with which the mind can accommodate the properties of living creatures to things that are inanimate, or to abſtract conceptions of its own forming. SECT. XVI.

INDEED, it is very remarkable, that there is a wonderful proneneſs in human nature to animate all objects. Whether this ariſes from a ſort of aſſimilating principle, from a propenſion to ſpread a reſemblance of ourſelves over all other things, or

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from whatever other cauſe it ariſes, ſo it is, that almoſt every emotion which in the leaſt agitates the mind, beſtows upon its object a momentary idea of life. Let a man by any unwary ſtep, ſprain his ankle, or hurt his foot upon a ſtone, and, in the ruffled diſcompoſed moment, he will, ſometimes, feel himſelf diſpoſed to break the ſtone in pieces, or to utter paſſionate expreſſions againſt it, as if it had done him an injury. If one has been long accuſtomed to a certain ſet of objects, which have made a ſtrong impreſſion on his imagination; as to a houſe, where he has paſſed many agreeable years; or to fields, and trees, and mountains, among which he has often walked with the greateſt delight: when he is obliged to part with them, eſpecially if he has no proſpect of ever ſeeing them again, he can ſcarce avoid having ſomewhat of the ſame feeling as when he is leaving old friends. They ſeem endowed with life. They become objects of his affection; and in the moment of his parting, it ſcarce ſeems abſurd to him, to give vent to his feeling in words, and to take a formal adieu.

So ſtrong is that impreſſion of life which is made upon us, by the more magnificent and ſtriking objects of nature eſpecially, that I doubt not, in the leaſt, of this having been one cauſe of the multiplication of divinities in the Heathen world. The belief of Dryads and Naiads, of the Genius of the Wood, and the God of the River, among men

men of lively imaginations, in the early ages of the world, eaſily aroſe from this turn of mind. When their favourite rural objects had often been animated in their fancy, it was an eaſy tranſition to attribute to them ſome real divinity, ſome unſeen power or genius which inhabited them, or in ſome peculiar manner belonging to them. Imagination was highly gratified, by thus gaining ſomewhat to reſt upon with more ſtability; and when belief coincided ſo much with imagination, very ſlight cauſes would be ſufficient to eſtabliſh it. LECT. XVI.

FROM this deduction may be eaſily ſeen how it comes to paſs, that Perſonification makes ſo great a figure in all compoſitions, where imagination or paſſion have any concern. On innumerable occaſions, it is the very language of imagination and paſſion, and, therefore, deſerves to be attended to, and examined with peculiar care. There are three different degrees of this Figure; which it is neceſſary to remark and diſtinguiſh, in order to determine the propriety of its uſe. The firſt is, when ſome of the properties or qualities of living creatures are aſcribed to inanimate objects; the ſecond, when thoſe inanimate objects are introduced as acting like ſuch as have life; and the third, when they are repreſented, either as ſpeaking to us, or as liſtening to what we ſay to them.

THE firſt and loweſt degree of this Figure, conſiſts in aſcribing to inanimate objects ſome of the

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the qualities of living creatures. Where this is done, as is moſt commonly the caſe, in a word, or two, and by way of an epithet added to the object, as, " a raging ſtorm, a deceitful diſeaſe, a " cruel diſaſter," &c. it raiſes the ſtyle ſo little, that the humbleſt diſcourſe will admit it without any force. This, indeed, is ſuch an obſcure degree of Perſonification, that one may doubt whether it deſerves the name, and might not be claſſed with ſimple Metaphor, which eſcape in a manner unnoticed. Happily employed, however, it ſometimes adds beauty and ſprightlineſs to an expreſſion, as in this line of Virgil:

Aut conjurato deſcendens Dacus ab Iſtro.
GEOR. II. 474.

Where the perſonal epithet, *conjurato*, applied to the river *Iſtro*, is infinitely more poetical than if it had been applied to the perſon thus:

Aut conjuratus deſcendens Dacus ab Iſtro.

A very little taſte will make any one feel the difference between theſe two lines.

THE next degree of this Figure is, when we introduce inanimate objects acting like thoſe that have life. Here we riſe a ſtep higher, and the Perſonification becomes ſenſible. According to the nature of the action, which we attribute to thoſe inanimate objects, and the particularity with which we deſcribe it, ſuch is the ſtrength of the Figure,

Figure. When purſued to any length, it belongs only to ſtudied harangues, to highly figured and eloquent diſcourſe: when ſlightly touched, it may be admitted into ſubjects of leſs elevation. Cicero, for inſtance, ſpeaking of the caſes where killing another is lawful in ſelf-defence, uſes the following words: "Aliquando nobis gladius ad occidendum "hominem ab ipſis porrigitur legibus." (Orat. pro Milone.) The expreſſion is happy. The laws are perſonified, as reaching forth their hand to give us a ſword for putting one to death. Such ſhort Perſonifications as theſe may be admitted, even into moral treatiſes, or works of cool reaſoning; and, provided, they be eaſy and not ſtrained, and that we be not cloyed with too frequent returns of them, they have a good effect on ſtyle, and render it both ſtrong and lively.

THE genius of our Language gives us an advantage in the uſe of this Figure. As, with us, no ſubſtantive nouns have gender, or are maſculine and feminine, except the proper names of male and female creatures; by giving a gender to any inanimate object, or abſtract idea, that is, in place of the pronoun *it*, uſing the perſonal pronouns, *he* or *ſhe*, we preſently raiſe the ſtyle, and begin Perſonification. In ſolemn diſcourſe, this may often be done to good purpoſe when ſpeaking of religion, or virtue, or our country, or any ſuch object of dignity. I ſhall give a remarkably fine example from a ſermon of Biſhop Sherlock's, where

LECT. XVI. where we ſhall ſee natural religion beautifully perſonified, and be able to judge from it of the ſpirit and grace which this Figure, when well conducted, beſtows on a diſcourſe. I muſt take notice, at the ſame time, that it is an inſtance of this Figure, carried as far as proſe, even in its higheſt elevation, will admit, and, therefore, ſuited only to compoſitions where the great efforts of eloquence are allowed. The author is comparing together our Saviour and Mahomet: "Go," ſays he, "to your "Natural Religion; lay before her Mahomet, "and his diſciples, arrayed in armour and blood, "riding in triumph over the ſpoils of thouſands "who fell by his victorious ſword. Shew her the "cities which he ſet in flames, the countries which "he raviſhed and deſtroyed, and the miſerable "diſtreſs of all the inhabitants of the earth. When "ſhe has viewed him in this ſcene, carry her into "his retirement; ſhew her the prophet's cham-"ber; his concubines and his wives; and let her "hear him allege revelation, and a divine com-"miſſion, to juſtify his adultery and luſt. When "ſhe is tired with this proſpect, then ſhew her "the bleſſed Jeſus, humble and meek, doing "good to all the ſons of men. Let her ſee him "in his moſt retired privacies; let her follow him "to the mount, and hear his devotions and ſup-"plications to God. Carry her to his table to "view his poor fare; and hear his heavenly diſ-"courſe. Let her attend him to the tribunal, and "conſider the patience with which he endured the

"ſcoffs

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"ſcoffs and reproaches of his enemies. Lead her "to his croſs; let her view him in the agony of "death, and hear his laſt prayer for his perſecu- "tors; *Father, forgive them, for they know not* "*what they do!*—When Natural Religion has "thus viewed both, aſk her, which is the Pro- "phet of God? But her anſwer we have already "had, when ſhe ſaw part of this ſcene, through the "eyes of the Centurion, who attended at the croſs. "By him ſhe ſpoke, and ſaid, *Truly this Man* "*was the Son of God**." This is more than elegant; it is truly ſublime. The whole paſſage is animated; and the Figure riſes at the concluſion, when Natural Religion, who, before, was only a ſpectator, is introduced as ſpeaking by the Centurion's voice. It has the better effect too, that it occurs at the concluſion of a diſcourſe, where we naturally look for moſt warmth and dignity. Did Biſhop Sherlock's Sermons, or, indeed, any Engliſh ſermons whatever, afford us many paſſages equal to this, we ſhould oftener have recourſe to them for inſtances of the beauty of compoſition.

HITHERTO we have ſpoken of proſe; in poetry Perſonifications of this kind are extremely frequent, and are indeed, the life and ſoul of it. We expect to find every thing animated in the deſcriptions of a poet who has a lively fancy. Accordingly Homer, the father and prince of poets, is remark-

* Biſhop Sherlock's Sermons, Vol. I. Diſc. ix.

able

LECT. XVI. able for the uſe of this Figure. War, peace, darts, ſpears, towns, rivers, every thing, in ſhort, is alive in his writings. The ſame is the caſe with Milton and Shakeſpeare. No Perſonification, in any author, is more ſtriking, or introduced on a more proper occaſion, than the following of Milton's, on occaſion of Eve's eating the forbidden fruit:

> So ſaying, her raſh hand, in evil hour
> Forth reaching to the fruit, ſhe pluck'd, ſhe eat;
> Earth felt the wound; and Nature, from her ſeat
> Sighing, through all her works, gave ſigns of woe,
> That all was loſt.——— ix. 780.

All the circumſtances and ages of men, poverty, riches, youth, old age, all the diſpoſitions and paſſions, melancholy, love, grief, contentment, are capable of being perſonified in poetry, with great propriety. Of this, we meet with frequent examples in Milton's Allegro and Penſeroſo, Parnell's Hymn to Contentment, Thomſon's Seaſons, and all the good poets: nor, indeed, is it eaſy to ſet any bounds to Perſonifications of this kind, in poetry.

One of the greateſt pleaſures we receive from poetry, is, to find ourſelves always in the midſt of our fellows; and to ſee every thing thinking, feeling, and acting, as we ourſelves do. This is perhaps the principal charm of this ſort of figured ſtyle, that it introduces us into ſociety with all nature, and intereſts us, even in inanimate ob-

jects, by forming a connection between them and us, through that ſenſibility which it aſcribes to them. This is exemplified in the following beautiful paſſage of Thomſon's Summer, wherein the life which he beſtows upon all nature, when deſcribing the effects of the riſing ſun, renders the ſcenery uncommonly gay and intereſting:

But yonder comes the powerful king of day
Rejoicing in the eaſt. The leſſening cloud,
The kindling azure, and the mountain's brow
Tipt with æthereal gold, his near approach
Betoken glad.———

——— By thee refin'd,
In briſker meaſures, the relucent ſtream
Friſks o'er the mead. The precipice abrupt,
Projecting horror on the blacken'd flood,
Softens at thy return. The deſert joys,
Wildly through all his melancholy bounds
Rude ruins glitter; and the briny deep,
Seen from ſome pointed promontory top,
Reflects from every fluctuating wave
A glance extenſive as the day.———

The ſame effect is remarkable in that fine paſſage of Milton:

———To the nuptial bower
I led her bluſhing like the morn. All heaven
And happy conſtellations, on that hour,
Shed their ſelecteſt influence. The earth
Gave ſigns of gratulation, and each hill.
Joyous the birds: freſh gales, and gentle airs
Whiſper'd it to the woods, and from their wings
Flung roſe, flung odour from the ſpicy ſhrub,
Diſporting.——

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THE third and higheſt degree of this Figure remains to be mentioned, when inanimate objects are introduced, not only as feeling and acting, but as ſpeaking to us, or hearing and liſtening when we addreſs ourſelves to them. This, though on ſeveral occaſions far from being unnatural, is, however, more difficult in the execution, than the other kinds of Perſonification. For this is plainly the boldeſt of all rhetorical Figures; it is the ſtyle of ſtrong paſſion only; and, therefore, never to be attempted, unleſs when the mind is conſiderably heated and agitated. A ſlight Perſonification of ſome inanimate thing, acting as if it had life, can be reliſhed by the mind, in the midſt of cool deſcription, and when its ideas are going on in the ordinary train. But it muſt be in a ſtate of violent emotion, and have departed conſiderably from its common track of thought, before it can ſo far realiſe the Perſonification of an inſenſible object, as to conceive it liſtening to what we ſay, or making any return to us. All ſtrong paſſions, however, have a tendency to uſe this Figure; not only love, anger, and indignation, but even thoſe which are ſeemingly more diſpiriting, ſuch as grief, remorſe, and melancholy. For all paſſions ſtruggle for vent, and if they can find no other object, will, rather than be ſilent, pour themſelves forth to woods, and rocks, and the moſt inſenſible things; eſpecially, if theſe be in any degree connected with the cauſes and objects that have thrown the mind into this agitation. Hence, in poetry, where the greateſt liberty is allowed to the language of paſſion, it is

eaſy to produce many beautiful examples of this Figure. Milton affords us an extremely fine one, in that moving and tender addreſs which Eve makes to Paradiſe, juſt before ſhe is compelled to leave it. LECT. XVI.

Oh! unexpected ſtroke, worſe than of death!
Muſt I thus leave thee, Paradiſe! thus leave
Thee, native ſoil, theſe happy walks, and ſhades,
Fit haunt of gods! where I had hope to ſpend
Quiet, though ſad, the reſpite of that day,
Which muſt be mortal to us both. O flowers!
That never will in other climate grow,
My early viſitation and my laſt
At ev'n, which I bred up with tender hand,
From your firſt op'ning buds, and gave you names!
Who now ſhall rear you to the ſun, or rank
Your tribes, and water from th' ambroſial fount?

Book II. l. 268.

This is altogether the language of nature, and of female paſſion. It is obſervable, that all plaintive paſſions are peculiarly prone to the uſe of this Figure. The complaints which Philoctetes, in Sophocles, pours out to the rocks and caves of Lemnos, amidſt the exceſs of his grief and deſpair, are remarkably fine examples of it *. And

* Ὦ λιμενες, ὦ προβλητες, ὦ ξυνουσιαι
Θηρων ορειων, ὦ καταρρωγες πετραι
Υμιν ταδ' ὡ γαρ αλλον ὁιδ' ὁτω λεγω·
Ανακλαιομαι παρουσι τοις εἰωθοσιν, &c.

" O mountains, rivers, rocks, and ſavage herds,
" To you I ſpeak! to you alone I now
" Muſt breathe my ſorrows! you are wont to hear
" My ſad complaints, and I will tell you all
" That I have ſuffered from Achilles' ſon!"

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there are frequent examples, not in poetry only, but in real life, of perſons, when juſt about to ſuffer death, taking a paſſionate farewell of the ſun, moon, and ſtars, or other ſenſible objects around them.

THERE are two great rules for the management of this ſort of Perſonification. The firſt rule is, never to attempt it, unleſs when prompted by ſtrong paſſion, and never to continue it when the paſſion begins to flag. It is one of thoſe high ornaments, which can only find place in the moſt warm and ſpirited parts of compoſition; and there, too, muſt be employed with moderation.

THE ſecond rule is, never to perſonify any object in this way, but ſuch as has ſome dignity in itſelf, and can make a proper figure in this elevation to which we raiſe it. The obſervance of this rule is required, even in the lower degrees of Perſonification; but ſtill more, when an addreſs is made to the perſonified object. To addreſs the corpſe of a deceaſed friend, is natural; but to addreſs the clothes which he wore, introduces mean and degrading ideas. So alſo, addreſſing the ſeveral parts of one's body, as if they were animated, is not congruous to the dignity of paſſion. For this reaſon, I muſt condemn the following paſſage, in a very beautiful Poem of Mr. Pope's, Eloiſa to Abelard:

Dear fatal name! reſt ever unreveal'd,
Nor paſs theſe lips in holy ſilence ſeal'd.
Hide it, my heart, within that cloſe diſguiſe,
Where, mix'd with God's, his lov'd idea lies:

Oh!

Oh! write it not, my hand!—his name appears
Already written:—blot it out, my tears!

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Here are ſeveral different objects and parts of the body perſonified; and each of them is addreſſed or ſpoken to; let us conſider with what propriety. The firſt is, the name of Abelard: "Dear fatal "name! reſt ever," &c. To this no reaſonable objection can be made. For, as the name of a perſon often ſtands for the perſon himſelf, and ſuggeſts the ſame ideas, it can bear this Perſonification with ſufficient dignity. Next, Eloiſa ſpeaks to herſelf; and perſonifies her heart for this purpoſe: "Hide it, my heart, within that cloſe," &c. As the heart is a dignified part of the human frame, and is often put for the mind or affections, this alſo may paſs without blame. But, when from her heart ſhe paſſes to her hand, and tells her hand not to write his name, this is forced and unnatural; a perſonified hand is low, and not in the ſtyle of true paſſion; and the Figure becomes ſtill worſe, when, in the laſt place, ſhe exhorts her tears to blot out what her hand had written, "Oh! write it not," &c. There is, in theſe two lines, an air of epigrammatic conceit, which native paſſion never ſuggeſts; and which is altogether unſuitable to the tenderneſs which breathes through the reſt of that excellent poem.

In proſe compoſitions, this Figure requires to be uſed with ſtill greater moderation and delicacy.

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The ſame liberty is not allowed to the imagination there, as in poetry. The ſame aſſiſtances cannot be obtained for raiſing paſſion to its proper height by the force of numbers, and the glow of ſtyle. However, addreſſes to inanimate objects are not excluded from proſe; but have their place only in the higher ſpecies of oratory. A public Speaker may on ſome occaſions very properly addreſs religion, or virtue; or his native country, or ſome city or province, which has ſuffered perhaps great calamities, or been the ſcene of ſome memorable action. But we muſt remember, that as ſuch addreſſes are among the higheſt efforts of eloquence, they ſhould never be attempted, unleſs by perſons of more than ordinary genius. For if the orator fails in his deſign of moving our paſſions by them, he is ſure of being laughed at. Of all frigid things, the moſt frigid are the awkward and unſeaſonable attempts ſometimes made towards ſuch kinds of Perſonification, eſpecially if they be long continued. We ſee the writer or ſpeaker toiling, and labouring, to expreſs the language of ſome paſſion, which he neither feels himſelf, nor can make us feel. We remain not only cold, but frozen; and are at full leiſure to criticiſe on the ridiculous figure which the perſonified object makes, when we ought to have been tranſported with a glow of enthuſiaſm. Some of the French writers, particularly Boſſuet and Fletcher, in their ſermons and funeral orations, have attempted and executed this Figure, not without warmth and dignity. Their works

works are exceedingly worthy of being conſulted, for inſtances of this, and of ſeveral other ornaments of ſtyle. Indeed, the vivacity and ardour of the French genius is more ſuited to this bold ſpecies of oratory, than the more correct but leſs animated genius of the Britiſh, who in their proſe works very rarely attempt any of the high Figures of eloquence *. So much for Perſonifications, or Proſopopœia in all its different forms. LECT. XVI.

APOSTROPHE

* In the "Oraiſons Funebres de M. Boſſuet," which I conſider as one of the maſter-pieces of modern eloquence, Apoſtrophes and addreſſes to perſonified objects frequently occur, and are ſupported with much ſpirit. Thus, for inſtance, in the funeral oration of Mary of Auſtria, Queen of France, the author addreſſes Algiers, in the proſpect of the advantage which the arms of Louis XIV. were to gain over it; "Avant "lui la France, preſque ſans vaiſſeaux, tenoit en vain aux deux "mers. Maintenant, on les voit couvertes depuis le Levant "juſqu'au couchant de nos flottes victorieuſes: & la hardieſſe "Françoiſe port par tout la terreur avec le nom de Louis. Tu "cederas, tu tomberas ſous ſe vainqueur, Alger! riche des "depouilles de la Chretienté. Tu diſois en ton cœur avare, "je tiens le mer ſous ma loix, et les nations ſont ma proie: "La legereté de tes vaiſſeaux te donnoit de la confiance. Mais "tu te verras attaqué dans tes murailles, comme un oiſſeau "raviſſant qu'on iroit chercher parmi ces rochers, & dans ſon "nid, où il partage ſon butin à ſes petits. Tu rends deja tes "eſclaves. Louis a briſé les fers, dont tu acablois ſes ſujets," &c. In another paſſage of the ſame oration, he thus apoſtrophizes the Iſle of Pheaſants, which had been rendered famous for being the ſcene of thoſe conferences in which the treaty of the Pyrenees between France and Spain, and the marriage of this Princeſs with the King of France, were concluded.

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APOSTROPHE is a Figure ſo much of the ſame kind, that it will not require many words. It is an addreſs to a real perſon; but one who is either abſent or dead, as if he were preſent and liſtening to us. It is ſo much allied to an addreſs to inanimate objects perſonified, that both theſe figures are ſometimes called Apoſtrophes. However, the proper Apoſtrophe is in boldneſs one degree lower than the addreſs to perſonified objects; for it certainly requires a leſs effort of imagination to ſuppoſe perſons preſent who are dead or abſent, than to animate inſenſible beings, and direct our diſcourſe to them. Both figures are ſubject to the ſame rule of being prompted by paſſion, in order

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cluded. "Iſle pacifique où ſe doivent terminer les differends "de deux grands empires à qui tu ſers de limites; iſle eternelle- "ment memorable par les conferences de deux grands miniſters. "——Auguſte journée où deux fieres nations, long tems "enemis, et alors reconcilées par Marie Thereſe s'avançent "ſur leur confins, leur rois à leur tête, non plus pour ſe com- "battre, mais pour s'embraſſer.—Fêtes ſacrées, marriage for- "tuné, voile nuptial, benediction, ſacrifice, puis-je meler "adjourdhui vos ceremonies, et vos pompes, avec ces pompes "funebres, & le comble des grandeurs avec leur ruines!" In the funeral oration of Henrietta, Queen of England, (which is perhaps the nobleſt of all his compoſitions,) after recounting all ſhe had done to ſupport her unfortunate huſband, he concludes with this beautiful Apoſtrophe; "O mere! O femme! O "reine admirable & digne d'une meilleure fortune, ſi les for- "tunes de la terre étoient quelque choſe! Enfin il faut ceder "à votre ſort. Vous avez aſſez ſoutenu l'état, que eſt attaqué "par une force invincible et divine. Il ne reſte plus deformais, "ſi non que vous teniez ferme parmi ſes ruines."

to

to render them natural; for both are the language of paſſion or ſtrong emotions only. Among the poets Apoſtrophe is frequent; as in Virgil. LECT. XVI.

——Pereunt Hypaniſque Dymaſque
Confixi a ſociis; nec te, tua plurima, Pantheu
Labentem pietas, nec Apollinis inſula texit * !

The poems of Oſſian are full of the moſt beautiful inſtances of this figure: "Weep on the "rocks of roaring winds, O maid of Iniſtore; "bend thy fair head over the waves, thou fairer "than the ghoſts of the hills, when it moves in a "ſunbeam at noon over the ſilence of Morven! "He is fallen! Thy youth is low; pale beneath "the ſword of Cuthullin †!" Quinctilian affords us a very fine example in proſe; when, in the beginning of his ſixth book, deploring the untimely death of his ſon, which had happened during the courſe of the work, he makes a very moving and tender Apoſtrophe to him. "Nam quo ille "animo, qua medicorum admiratione, menſium "octo valetudinem tulit? ut me in ſupremis con-"ſolatus eſt? quam etiam jam deficiens, jamque "non noſter, ipſum illum alienatæ mentis errorem "circa ſolas literas habuit? Tuoſne ergo, O meæ

* Nor Pantheus! thee, thy Mitre, nor the bands
Of awful Phœbus, ſav'd from impious hands.
DRYDEN.

† Fingal, B. I.

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" ſpes inanes! labentes oculos, tuum fugientem
" ſpiritum vidi? Tuum corpus frigidum, exangue
" complexus, animam recipere, auramque com-
" munem haurire amplius potui? Tene, conſulari
" nuper adoptione ad omnium ſpes honorum patris
" admotum, te, avunculo prætori generum deſti-
" natum; te, omnium ſpe Atticæ eloquentiæ
" candidatum, parens ſuperſtes tantum ad pœnas
" amiſi *!" In this paſſage, Quinctilian ſhows the true genius of an orator, as much as he does elſewhere that of the critic.

For ſuch bold Figures of diſcourſe as ſtrong Perſonifications, addreſſes to perſonified objects,

* "With what ſpirit, and how much to the admiration of
" the phyſicians, did he bear throughout eight months his
" lingering diſtreſs! With what tender attention did he ſtudy,
" even in the laſt extremity, to comfort me! And, when no
" longer himſelf, how affecting was it to behold the diſordered
" efforts of his wandering mind, wholly employed on ſubjects
" of literature! Ah! my fruſtrated and fallen hopes! Have
" I then beheld your cloſing eyes, and heard the laſt groan iſſue
" from your lips? After having embraced your cold and
" breathleſs body, how was it in my power to draw the vital
" air, or continue to drag a miſerable life? When I had juſt
" beheld you raiſed by conſular adoption to the proſpect of all
" your father's honours, deſtined to be ſon-in-law to your
" uncle the Prætor, pointed out by general expectation as the
" ſucceſsful candidate for the Prize of Attic eloquence, in this
" moment of your opening honours, muſt I loſe you for ever,
" and remain an unhappy parent, ſurviving only to ſuffer
" woe?"

and

and Apoſtrophes, the glowing imagination of the ancient Oriental nations was particularly fitted. Hence, in the ſacred Scriptures, we find ſome very remarkable inſtances: "O, thou ſword of the "Lord! how long will it be ere thou be quiet; "put thyſelf up into the ſcabbard, reſt and be "ſtill! How can it be quiet, ſeeing the Lord "hath given it a charge againſt Aſhkelon, and "againſt the ſea-ſhore? there he hath appointed "it*." There is one paſſage in particular, which I muſt not omit to mention, becauſe it contains a greater aſſemblage of ſublime ideas, of bold and daring Figures, than is perhaps any where to be met with. It is in the fourteenth chapter of Iſaiah, where the prophet thus deſcribes the fall of the Aſſyrian empire: "Thou ſhalt take up this "proverb againſt the king of Babylon, and ſay, "How hath the oppreſſor ceaſed! the golden city "ceaſed! The Lord hath broken the ſtaff of the "wicked, and the ſceptre of the rulers. He who "ſmote the people in wrath with a continual "ſtroke; he that ruled the nations in anger, is "perſecuted, and none hindereth. The whole "earth is at reſt, and is quiet: they break forth "into ſinging. Yea, the fir-trees rejoice at thee, "and the cedars of Lebanon, ſaying, Since thou "art laid down, no feller is come up againſt us. "Hell from beneath is moved for thee, to meet "thee at thy coming: it ſtirreth up the dead for

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* Jer. xlvii. 6, 7.

"thee,

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" thee, even all the chief ones of the earth: it
" hath raiſed up from their thrones all the kings
" of the nations. All they ſhall ſpeak, and ſay
" unto thee, Art thou alſo become weak as we?
" Art thou become like unto us? Thy pomp is
" brought down to the grave, and the noiſe of
" thy viols: the worm is ſpread under thee, and
" the worms cover thee. How art thou fallen
" from Heaven, O Lucifer, ſon of the morning!
" how art thou cut down to the ground, which
" didſt weaken the nations! For thou haſt ſaid in
" thine heart; I will aſcend into Heaven, I will
" exalt my throne above the ſtars of God; I will
" ſit alſo upon the mount of the congregation, in
" the ſides of the north. I will aſcend above the
" heights of the clouds, I will be like the Moſt
" High. Yet thou ſhalt be brought down to
" Hell, to the ſides of the pit. They that ſee
" thee ſhall narrowly look upon thee, and conſider
" thee, ſaying, Is this the man that made the
" earth to tremble, that did ſhake kingdoms?
" that made the world as a wilderneſs, and de-
" ſtroyed the cities thereof? that opened not the
" houſe of his priſoners? All the kings of the
" nations, even all of them lie in glory, every
" one in his own houſe. But thou art caſt out of
" thy grave, like an abominable branch: and as
" the raiment of thoſe that are ſlain, thruſt
" through with a ſword, that go down to the
" ſtones of the pit, as a carcaſe trodden under
" feet." This whole paſſage is full of ſublimity.

Every

Every object is animated; a variety of perſonages are introduced; we hear the Jews, the fir-trees, and cedars of Lebanon, the ghoſts of departed Kings, the King of Babylon himſelf, and thoſe who look upon his body, all ſpeaking in their order, and acting their different parts without confuſion. LECT. XVI.

LECTURE XVII.

COMPARISON, ANTITHESIS, INTERROGATION, EXCLAMATION, AND OTHER FIGURES OF SPEECH.

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WE are ſtill engaged in the conſideration of Figures of Speech; which, as they add much to the beauty of ſtyle when properly employed, and are at the ſame time liable to be greatly abuſed, require a careful diſcuſſion. As it would be tedious to dwell on all the variety of figurative expreſſions which rhetoricians have enumerated, I choſe to ſelect the capital Figures, ſuch as occur moſt frequently, and to make my remarks on theſe; the principles and rules laid down concerning them will ſufficiently direct us to the uſe of the reſt, either in proſe or poetry. Of Metaphor, which is the moſt common of them all, I treated fully; and in the laſt Lecture I diſcourſed of Hyperbole, Perſonification, and Apoſtrophe. This Lecture will nearly finiſh what remains on the head of Figures.

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COMPARISON, or Simile, is what I am to treat of firſt: a Figure frequently employed both by Poets and Proſe-writers, for the ornament of Compoſition. In a former Lecture, I explained fully the difference betwixt this and Metaphor. A Metaphor is a compariſon implied, but not expreſſed as ſuch; as when I ſay, "Achilles is a Lion," meaning that he reſembles one in courage or ſtrength. A compariſon is, when the reſemblance between two objects is expreſſed in form, and generally purſued more fully than the nature of a Metaphor admits; as when I ſay, "The "actions of princes are like thoſe great rivers, "the courſe of which every one beholds, but "their ſprings have been ſeen by few." This ſlight inſtance will ſhow, that a happy Compariſon is a kind of ſparkling ornament, which adds not a little luſtre and beauty to diſcourſe; and hence ſuch Figures are termed by Cicero, "Orationis "lumina."

THE pleaſure we take in Compariſons is juſt and natural. We may remark three different ſources whence it ariſes. Firſt, from the pleaſure which nature has annexed to that act of the mind by which we compare any two objects together, trace reſemblances among thoſe that are different, and difference among thoſe that reſemble each other; a pleaſure, the final cauſe of which is, to prompt us to remark and obſerve, and thereby to make us advance in uſeful knowledge. This operation

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ration of the mind is naturally and univerſally agreeable; as appears from the delight which even children have in comparing things together, as ſoon as they are capable of attending to the objects that ſurround them. Secondly, The pleaſure of Compariſon ariſes from the illuſtration which the Simile employed gives to the principal object; from the clearer view of it which it preſents; or the more ſtrong impreſſion of it which it ſtamps upon the mind: and, thirdly, It ariſes from the introduction of a new and commonly a ſplendid object, aſſociated to the principal one of which we treat; and from the agreeable picture which that object preſents to the fancy; new ſcenes being thereby brought into view, which, without the aſſiſtance of this Figure, we could not have enjoyed.

ALL Compariſons whatever may be reduced under two heads, *Explaining* and *Embelliſhing* Compariſons. For when a writer likens the object of which he treats to any other thing, it always is, or at leaſt always ſhould be, with a view either to make us underſtand that object more diſtinctly, or to dreſs it up, and adorn it. All manner of ſubjects admit of Explaining Compariſons. Let an author be reaſoning ever ſo ſtrictly, or treating the moſt abſtruſe point in philoſophy, he may very properly introduce a Compariſon, merely with a view to make his ſubject better underſtood. Of this nature is the following in Mr. Harris's Hermes,

Hermes, employed to explain a very abſtract point, the diſtinction between the powers of ſenſe and imagination in the human mind. "As wax," ſays he, "would not be adequate to the purpoſe of ſignature, if it had not the power to retain as well as "to receive the impreſſion, the ſame holds of "the ſoul with reſpect to ſenſe and imagination. "Senſe is its receptive power; imagination its "retentive. Had it ſenſe without imagination, "it would not be as wax, but as water, where "though all impreſſions be inſtantly made, yet as "ſoon as they are made they are inſtantly loſt." In Compariſons of this nature, the underſtanding is concerned much more than the fancy: and therefore the only rules to be obſerved, with reſpect to them, are, that they be clear, and that they be uſeful; that they tend to render our conception of the principal object more diſtinct; and that they do not lead our view aſide, and bewilder it with any falſe light. LECT. XVII.

BUT embelliſhing Compariſons, introduced not ſo much with a view to inform and inſtruct, as to adorn the ſubject of which we treat, are thoſe with which we are chiefly concerned at preſent, as Figures of Speech; and thoſe, indeed, which moſt frequently occur. Reſemblance, as I before mentioned, is the foundation of this Figure. We muſt not, however, take Reſemblance, in too ſtrict a ſenſe, for actual ſimilitude and likeneſs of appearance. Two objects may ſometimes be very happily

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happily compared to one another, though they reſemble each other, ſtrictly ſpeaking, in nothing; only, becauſe they agree in the effects which they produce upon the mind; becauſe they raiſe a train of ſimilar, or, what may be called, concordant ideas; ſo that the remembrance of the one, when recalled, ſerves to ſtrengthen the impreſſion made by the other. For example, to deſcribe the nature of ſoft and melancholy muſic, Oſſian ſays, "The "muſic of Carryl was, like the memory of joys "they are paſt, pleaſant and mournful to the ſoul." This is happy and delicate. Yet ſurely, no kind of muſic has any reſemblance to a feeling of the mind, ſuch as the memory of paſt joys. Had it been compared to the voice of the nightingale, or the murmur of the ſtream, as it would have been by ſome ordinary poet, the likeneſs would have been more ſtrict; but, by founding his Simile upon the effect which Carryl's muſic produced, the Poet, while he conveys a very tender image, gives us, at the ſame time, a much ſtronger impreſſion of the nature and ſtrain of that muſic: "Like the memory "of joys that are paſt, pleaſant and mournful to "the ſoul."

In general, whether Compariſons be founded on the ſimilitude of the two objects compared, or on ſome analogy and agreement in their effects, the fundamental requiſite of a Compariſon is, that it ſhall ſerve to illuſtrate the object for the ſake of which it is introduced, and to give us a ſtronger conception

conception of it. Some little excurſions of fancy may be permitted, in purſuing the Simile; but they muſt never deviate far from the principal object. If it be a great and noble one, every circumſtance in the Compariſon muſt tend to aggrandize it; if it be a beautiful one, to render it more amiable; if terrible, to fill us with more awe. But to be a little more particular: The rules to be given concerning Compariſons, reſpect chiefly two articles; the propriety of their introduction, and the nature of the objects whence they are taken. LECT. XVII.

FIRST, the propriety of their Introduction. From what has been already ſaid of Compariſons, it appears that they are not, like the figures of which I treated in the laſt Lecture, the language of ſtrong paſſion. No; they are the language of imagination rather than of paſſion; of an imagination ſprightly, indeed, and warmed; but undiſturbed by any violent or agitating emotion. Strong paſſion is too ſevere to admit this play of fancy. It has no leiſure to caſt about for reſembling objects; it dwells on that object which has ſeized and taken poſſeſſion of the ſoul. It is too much occupied and filled by it, to turn its view aſide, or to fix its attention on any other thing. An author, therefore, can ſcarcely commit a greater fault, than, in the midſt of paſſion, to introduce a Simile. Metaphorical expreſſion may be allowable in ſuch a ſituation; though even this

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may be carried too far: but the pomp and ſolemnity of a formal Compariſon is altogether a ſtranger to paſſion. It changes the key in a moment; relaxes and brings down the mind; and ſhews us a writer perfectly at his eaſe, while he is perſonating ſome other, who is ſuppoſed to be under the torment of agitation. Our writers of tragedies are very apt to err here. In ſome of Mr. Rowe's plays, theſe flowers of Similies have been ſtrewed unſeaſonably. Mr. Addiſon's Cato, too, is juſtly cenſurable in this reſpect; as, when Portius, juſt after Lucia had bid him farewell for ever, and when he ſhould naturally have been repreſented as in the moſt violent anguiſh, makes his reply in a ſtudied and affected Compariſon.

> Thus o'er the dying lamp th' unſteady flame
> Hangs quivering on a point, leaps off by fits,
> And falls again, as loth to quit its hold.
> Thou muſt not go; my ſoul ſtill hovers o'er thee,
> And can't get looſe.

Every one muſt be ſenſible, that this is quite remote from the language of Nature on ſuch occaſions.

HOWEVER, as compariſon is not the ſtyle of ſtrong paſſion, ſo neither, when employed for embelliſhment, is it the language of a mind wholly unmoved. It is a figure of dignity, and always requires ſome elevation in the ſubject, in order to make it proper: for it ſuppoſes the imagination to be uncommonly enlivened, though the heart be not agitated

agitated by paſſion. In a word, the proper place of Compariſons lies in the middle region between the highly pathetic, and the very humble ſtyle. This is a wide field, and gives ample range to the Figure. But even this field we muſt take care not to overſtock with it. For, as we before ſaid, it is a ſparkling ornament, and all things that ſparkle, dazzle and fatigue, if they recur too often. Similies ſhould, even in poetry, be uſed with moderation; but, in proſe writings, much more: otherwiſe, the ſtyle will become diſagreeably florid, and the ornament loſe its virtue and effect. LECT. XVII.

I PROCEED, next, to the rules that relate to objects whence Compariſons ſhould be drawn; ſuppoſing them introduced in their proper place.

IN the firſt place, they muſt not be drawn from things which have too near and obvious a reſemblance to the object with which we compare them. The great pleaſure of the act of comparing lies, in diſcovering likeneſſes among things of different ſpecies, where we would not, at the firſt glance, expect a reſemblance. There is little art or ingenuity in pointing out the reſemblance of two objects, that are ſo much akin, or lie ſo near to one another in nature, that every one ſees they muſt be alike. When Milton compares Satan's appearance, after his fall, to that of the Sun ſuffering an eclipſe, and affrighting the nations with portentous darkneſs, we are ſtruck with the happi-

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neſs and the dignity of the ſimilitude. But when he compares Eve's bower in Paradiſe, to the arbour of Pomona; or Eve herſelf, to a Driad, or Wood-nymph; we receive little entertainment: as every one ſees, that one arbour muſt, of courſe, in ſeveral reſpects reſemble another arbour, and one beautiful woman another beautiful woman.

AMONG Similies faulty through too great obviouſneſs of the likeneſs, we muſt likewiſe rank thoſe which are taken from objects become trite and familiar in poetical language. Such are the Similies of a hero to a lion, of a perſon in ſorrow to a flower drooping its head, of violent paſſion to a tempeſt, of chaſtity to ſnow, of virtue to the Sun or the ſtars, and many more of this kind, with which we are ſure to find modern writers, of ſecond-rate genius, abounding plentifully; handed down from every writer of verſes to another, as by hereditary right. Theſe compariſons were, at firſt, perhaps, very proper for the purpoſes to which they are applied. In the ancient original poets, who took them directly from nature, not from their predeceſſors, they add beauty. But they are now beaten; our ears are ſo accuſtomed to them, that they give no amuſement to the fancy. There is, indeed, no mark by which we can more readily diſtinguiſh a poet of true genius, from one of a barren imagination, than by the ſtrain of their Compariſons. All who call themſelves poets affect them: but, whereas a mere verſifier copies no new image from nature,

nature, which appears, to his uninventive genius exhauſted by thoſe who have gone before him, and, therefore, contents himſelf with humbly following their track; to an author of real fancy, nature ſeems to unlock, ſpontaneouſly, her hidden ſtores; and the eye, "quick glancing from earth "to heaven," diſcovers new ſhapes and forms, new likeneſſes between objects unobſerved before, which render his Similies original, expreſſive, and lively. LECT. XVII.

But, in the ſecond place, as Compariſons ought not to be founded on likeneſſes too obvious, ſtill leſs ought they to be founded on thoſe which are too faint and remote. For theſe, in place of aſſiſting, ſtrain the fancy to comprehend them, and throw no light upon the ſubject. It is alſo to be obſerved, that a Compariſon, which, in the principal circumſtances, carries a ſufficiently near reſemblance, may become unnatural and obſcure, if puſhed too far. Nothing is more oppoſite to the deſign of this Figure, than to hunt after a great number of coincidences in minute points, merely to ſhew how far the poet's wit can ſtretch the reſemblance. This is Mr. Cowley's common fault; whoſe Compariſons generally run out ſo far, as to become rather a ſtudied exerciſe of wit, than an illuſtration of the principal object. We need only open his works, his odes eſpecially, to find inſtances every where.

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In the third place, the object from which a Compariſon is drawn, ſhould never be an unknown object, or one of which few people can form clear ideas: "Ad inferendam rebus lucem," ſays Quinctilian, "repertæ ſunt ſimilitudines. Præ-"cipuè, igitur, eſt cuſtodiendum ne id quod ſimi-"litudinis gratiâ aſcivimus, aut obſcurum ſit, aut "ignotum. Debet enim id quod illuſtrandæ al-"terius rei gratiâ aſſumitur, ipſum eſſe clarius eo "quod illuminatur *." Compariſons, therefore, founded on philoſophical diſcoveries, or on any thing with which perſons of a certain trade only, or a certain profeſſion are converſant, attain not their proper effect. They ſhould be taken from thoſe illuſtrious, noted objects, which moſt of the readers either have ſeen, or can ſtrongly conceive. This leads me to remark a fault of which modern poets are very apt to be guilty. The ancients took their Similies from that face of nature, and that claſs of objects, with which they and their readers were acquainted. Hence lions, and wolves, and ſerpents, were fruitful, and very proper ſources of Similies amongſt them; and theſe having become

* "Compariſons have been introduced into diſcourſe for the "ſake of throwing light on the ſubject. We muſt, therefore, "be much on our guard, not to employ, as the ground of our "Simile, any object which is either obſcure or unknown. That, "ſurely, which is uſed for the purpoſe of illuſtrating ſome other "thing, ought to be more obvious and plain than the thing "intended to be illuſtrated."

a ſort

a ſort of conſecrated, claſſical images, are very commonly adopted by the moderns: injudiciouſly however, for the propriety of them is now in a great meaſure loſt. It is only at ſecond hand, and by deſcription, that we are acquainted with many of thoſe objects; and to moſt readers of poetry, it were more to the purpoſe, to deſcribe lions, or ſerpents, by Similies taken from men, than to deſcribe men by lions. Now-a-days, we can more eaſily form the conception of a fierce combat between two men, than between a bull and a tyger. Every country has a ſcenery peculiar to itſelf; and the imagery of every good poet will exhibit it. The introduction of unknown objects, or of a foreign ſcenery, betrays a poet copying, not after nature, but from other writers. I have only to obſerve further, LECT. XVII.

In the fourth place, that, in compoſitions of a ſerious or elevated kind, Similies ſhould never be taken from low or mean objects. Theſe are degrading; whereas, Similies are commonly intended to embelliſh, and to dignify; and therefore, unleſs in burleſque writings, or where Similies are introduced purpoſely to vilify and diminiſh an object, mean ideas ſhould never be preſented to us. Some of Homer's Compariſons have been taxed without reaſon, on this account. For it is to be remembered, that the meanneſs or dignity of objects depends, in a great degree, on the ideas and manners of the age wherein we live.: Many

LECT. XVII. Similies, therefore, drawn from the incidents of rural life, which appear low to us, had abundance of dignity in thoſe ſimpler ages of antiquity.

I HAVE now conſidered ſuch of the Figures of Speech as ſeemed moſt to merit a full and particular diſcuſſion: Metaphor, Hyberbole, Perſonification, Apoſtrophe, and Compariſon. A few more yet remain to be mentioned; the proper uſe and conduct of which will be eaſily underſtood from the principles already laid down.

As Compariſon is founded on the reſemblance, ſo Antitheſis on the contraſt or oppoſition of two objects. Contraſt has always this effect, to make each of the contraſted objects appear in the ſtronger light. White, for inſtance, never appears ſo bright as when it is oppoſed to black; and when both are viewed together. Antitheſis, therefore, may, on many occaſions, be employed to advantage, in order to ſtrengthen the impreſſion which we intend that any object ſhould make. Thus Cicero, in his oration for Milo, repreſenting the improbability of Milo's forming a deſign to take away the life of Clodius, at a time when all circumſtances were unfavourable to ſuch a deſign, and after he had let other opportunities ſlip, when he could have executed the ſame deſign, if he had formed it, with much more eaſe and ſafety, heightens our conviction of this improbability by a ſkilful uſe of this Figure: "Quem igitur cum omnium gratiâ interficere

"ficere noluit, hunc voluit cum aliquorum que-
"relâ? Quem jure, quem loco, quem tempore,
"quem impune, non eſt auſus, hunc injuriâ,
"iniquo loco, alieno tempore, periculo capitis,
"non dubitavit occidere*?" In order to render an Antitheſis more complete, it is always of advantage, that the words and members of the ſentence expreſſing the contraſted objects, be, as in this inſtance of Cicero's, ſimilarly conſtructed, and made to correſpond to each other. This leads us to remark the contraſt more, by ſetting the things which we oppoſe more clearly over againſt each other; in the ſame manner as when we contraſt a black and a white object, in order to perceive the full difference of their colour, we would chuſe to have both objects of the ſame bulk, and placed in the ſame light. Their reſemblance to each other, in certain circumſtances, makes their diſagreement in others more palpable.

At the ſame time, I muſt obſerve, that the frequent uſe of Antitheſis, eſpecially where the oppoſition in the words is nice and quaint, is apt to

* "Is it credible that, when he declined putting Clodius to "death with the conſent of all, he would chuſe to do it with "the diſapprobation of many? Can you believe that the per-"ſon whom he ſcrupled to ſlay, when he might have done ſo "with full juſtice, in a convenient place, at a proper time, "with ſecure impunity, he made no ſcruple to murder againſt "juſtice, in an unfavourable place, at an unſeaſonable time, "and at the riſque of capital condemnation?"

render

LECT. XVII. render ſtyle diſagreeable. Such a ſentence as the following, from Seneca, does very well, where it ſtands alone: "Si quem volueris eſſe divitem, non "eſt quod augeas divitias, ſed minuas cupidi-"tates*." Or this: "Si ad naturam vives, "nunquam eris pauper; ſi ad opinionem, nun-"quam dives†." A maxim, or moral ſaying, properly enough receives this form; both becauſe it is ſuppoſed to be the fruit of meditation, and becauſe it is deſigned to be engraven on the memory, which recalls it more eaſily by the help of ſuch contraſted expreſſions. But where a ſtring of ſuch ſentences ſucceed each other; where this becomes an author's favourite and prevailing manner of expreſſing himſelf, his ſtyle is faulty: and it is upon this account Seneca has been often, and juſtly, cenſured. Such a ſtyle appears too ſtudied and laboured; it gives us the impreſſion of an author attending more to his manner of ſaying things, than to the things themſelves which he ſays. Dr. Young, though a writer of real genius, was too fond of Antitheſis. In his Eſtimate of Human Life, we find whole paſſages that run in ſuch a ſtrain as this: "The peaſant complains aloud; "the courtier in ſecret repines. In want, what

* "If you ſeek to make one rich, ſtudy not to increaſe his "ſtores, but to diminiſh his deſires."

† "If you regulate your deſires according to the ſtandard "of nature, you will never be poor; if according to the ſtandard "of opinion, you will never be rich."

"diſtreſs;

"distreſs; in affluence, what ſatiety? The great LECT. XVII.
"are under as much difficulty to expend with
"pleaſure, as the mean to labour with ſucceſs.
"The ignorant, through ill-grounded hope, are
"diſappointed; the knowing, through knowledge,
"deſpond. Ignorance occaſions miſtake; miſtake,
"diſappointment; and diſappointment is miſery.
"Knowledge, on the other hand, gives true judg-
"ment; and true judgment of human things,
"gives a demonſtration of their inſufficiency to
"our peace." There is too much glitter in ſuch a ſtyle as this to pleaſe long. We are fatigued, by attending to ſuch quaint and artificial ſentences often repeated.

THERE is another ſort of Antitheſis, the beauty of which conſiſts in ſurpriſing us by the unexpected contraſt of things which it brings together. Much wit may be ſhewn in this; but it belongs wholly to pieces of profeſſed wit and humour, and can find no place in grave compoſitions. Mr. Pope, who is remarkably fond of Antitheſis, is often happy in this uſe of the Figure. So, in his Rape of the Lock:

Whether the nymph ſhall break Diana's law,
Or ſome frail china jar receive a flaw;
Or ſtrain her honour or her new brocade;
Forget her prayers, or miſs a maſquerade;
Or loſe her heart, or necklace at a ball;
Or whether heaven has doom'd that Shock muſt fall.

What

LECT. XVII. What is called the point of an epigram, conſiſts, for moſt part, in ſome Antitheſis of this kind; ſurpriſing us with the ſmart and unexpected turn which it gives to the thought; and in the fewer words it is brought out, it is always the happier.

COMPARISONS and Antitheſes are Figures of a cool nature; the productions of imagination, not of paſſion. Interrogations and Exclamations, of which I am next to ſpeak, are paſſionate Figures. They are, indeed, on ſo many occaſions, the native language of paſſion, that their uſe is extremely frequent; and, in ordinary converſation, when men are heated, they prevail as much as in the moſt ſublime oratory. The unfigured, literal uſe of Interrogation, is, to aſk a queſtion; but when men are prompted by paſſion, whatever they would affirm, or deny, with great vehemence, they naturally put in the form of a queſtion; expreſſing thereby the ſtrongeſt confidence of the truth of their own ſentiment, and appealing to their hearers for the impoſſibility of the contrary. Thus, in Scripture: "God is not a man, that he ſhould "lie; neither the ſon of man, that he ſhould re-"pent. Hath he ſaid it? and ſhall he not do it? "Hath he ſpoken it? and ſhall he not make it "good *?" So Demoſthenes, addreſſing himſelf to the Athenians: "Tell me, will you ſtill go "about and aſk one another, what news? What

* Numbers, chap. xxiii. ver. 19.

"can be more aſtoniſhing news than this, that "the man of Macedon makes war upon the "Athenians, and diſpoſes of the affairs of Greece? "—Is Philip dead? No, but he is ſick. What "ſignifies it to you whether he be dead or alive? "For, if any thing happens to this Philip, you "will immediately raiſe up another." All this delivered without Interrogation, had been faint and ineffectual; but the warmth and eagerneſs which this queſtioning method expreſſes, awakens the hearers, and ſtrikes them with much greater force. LECT. XVII.

INTERROGATIONS may often be employed with propriety, in the courſe of no higher emotions than naturally ariſe in purſuing ſome cloſe and earneſt reaſoning. But Exclamations belong only to ſtronger emotions of the mind; to ſurpriſe, admiration, anger, joy, grief, and the like:

Heu pietas! heu priſca fides! invictaque bello
Dextra!

Both Interrogation and Exclamation, and, indeed, all paſſionate Figures of ſpeech, operate upon us by means of ſympathy. Sympathy is a very powerful and extenſive principle in our nature, diſpoſing us to enter into every feeling and paſſion, which we behold expreſſed by others. Hence, a ſingle perſon coming into company with ſtrong marks, either of melancholy or joy, upon his countenance, will diffuſe that paſſion, in a moment, through

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through the whole circle. Hence, in a great crowd, paſſions are ſo eaſily caught, and ſo faſt ſpread, by that powerful contagion which the animated looks, cries, and geſtures of a multitude never fail to carry. Now, Interrogations and Exclamations, being natural ſigns of a moved and agitated mind, always, when they are properly uſed, diſpoſe us to ſympathiſe with the diſpoſitions of thoſe who uſe them, and to feel as they feel.

From this it follows, that the great rule with regard to the conduct of ſuch Figures is, that the writer attend to the manner in which nature dictates to us to expreſs any emotion or paſſion, and that he give his language that turn, and no other; above all, that he never affect the ſtyle of a paſſion which he does not feel. With Interrogations he may uſe a good deal of freedom; theſe, as above obſerved, falling in ſo much with the ordinary courſe of language and reaſoning, even when no great vehemence is ſuppoſed to have place in the mind. But, with reſpect to Exclamations, he muſt be more reſerved. Nothing has a worſe effect than the frequent and unſeaſonable uſe of them. Raw, juvenile writers imagine, that, by pouring them forth often, they render their compoſitions warm and animated. Whereas quite the contrary follows. They render it frigid to exceſs. When an author is always calling upon us to enter into tranſports which he has ſaid nothing to inſpire, we are both diſguſted and enraged at him. He raiſes

raiſes no ſympathy, for he gives us no paſſion of his own, in which we can take part. He gives us words, and not paſſion; and, of courſe, can raiſe no paſſion, unleſs that of indignation. Hence I am inclined to think, he was not much miſtaken, who ſaid, that when, on looking into a book, he found the pages thick beſpangled with the point which is called, "Punctum admirationis," he judged this to be a ſufficient reaſon for his laying it aſide. And indeed were it not for the help of this "punctum admirationis," with which many writers of the rapturous kind ſo much abound, one would be often at a loſs to diſcover, whether or not it was Exclamation which they aimed at. For, it has now become a faſhion, among theſe writers, to ſubjoin points of admiration to ſentences, which contain nothing but ſimple affirmations, or propoſitions; as if, by an affected method of pointing, they could transform them in the reader's mind into high Figures of eloquence. Much akin to this, is another contrivance practiſed by ſome writers, of ſeparating almoſt all the members of their ſentences from each other, by blank lines; as if, by ſetting them thus aſunder, they beſtowed ſome ſpecial importance upon them; and required us, in going along, to make a pauſe at every other word, and weigh it well. This, I think, may be called a Typographical Figure of Speech. Neither, indeed, ſince we have been led to mention the arts of writers for increaſing the importance of their words, does another cuſtom, LECT. XVII.

LECT. XVIII. which prevailed very much ſome time ago, ſeem worthy of imitation; I mean that of diſtinguiſhing the ſignificant words, in every ſentence, by Italic characters. On ſome occaſions, it is very proper to uſe ſuch diſtinctions. But when we carry them ſo far, as to mark with them every ſuppoſed emphatical word, theſe words are apt to multiply ſo faſt in the author's imagination, that every page is crowded with Italics, which can produce no effect whatever, but to hurt the eye, and create confuſion. Indeed, if the ſenſe point not out the moſt emphatical expreſſions, a variation in the type, eſpecially when occuring ſo frequently, will give ſmall aid. And accordingly, the moſt maſterly writers of late, have with good reaſon, laid aſide all thoſe feeble props of ſignificancy, and truſted wholly to the weight of their ſentiments for commanding attention. But to return from this digreſſion:

ANOTHER Figure of Speech proper only to animated and warm compoſition, is what ſome critical writers call Viſion; when, in place of relating ſomething that is paſt, we uſe the preſent tenſe, and deſcribe it as actually paſſing before our eyes. Thus Cicero, in his fourth oration againſt Catiline: "Videor enim mihi hanc urbem videre, "lucem orbis terrarum atque arcem omnium gen- "tium, ſubito uno incendio concidentem; cerno "animo ſepulta in patria miſeros atque inſepul- "tos acervos civium; verſatur mihi ante oculos "aſpectus

" aſpectus Cethegi, et furor, in veſtra cæde bac- LECT. XVII.
" chantis *." This manner of deſcription ſup-
poſes a ſort of enthuſiaſm, which carries the perſon who deſcribes in ſome meaſure out of himſelf; and, when well executed, muſt needs impreſs the reader or hearer ſtrongly, by the force of that ſympathy which I have before explained. But, in order to a ſucceſsful execution, it requires an uncommonly warm imagination, and ſuch a happy ſelection of circumſtances, as ſhall make us think we ſee before our eyes the ſcene that is deſcribed. Otherwiſe it ſhares the ſame fate with all feeble attempts towards paſſionate Figures; that of throwing ridicule upon the author, and leaving the reader more cool and unintereſted than he was before. The ſame obſervations are to be applied to Repetition, Suſpenſion, Correction, and many more of thoſe figurative forms of Speech, which Rhetoricians have enumerated among the Beauties of Eloquence. They are beautiful, or not, exactly in proportion as they are native expreſſions of the ſentiment or paſſion intended to be heightened by them. Let nature and paſſion always ſpeak their own language, and they will ſuggeſt Figures in abundance. But, when we ſeek to counterfeit a

* " I ſeem to myſelf to behold this city, the ornament of
" the earth, and the capital of all nations, ſuddenly involved
" in one conflagration. I ſee before me the ſlaughtered heaps
" of citizens lying unburied in the midſt of their ruined country.
" The furious countenance of Cethegus riſes to my view, while
" with a ſavage joy he is triumphing in your miſeries."

LECT. XVII. warmth which we do not feel, no Figures will either ſupply the defect, or conceal the impoſture.

THERE is one Figure (and I ſhall mention no more) of frequent uſe among all public ſpeakers, particularly at the bar, which Quinctilian inſiſts upon conſiderably, and calls Amplification. It conſiſts in an artful exaggeration of all the circumſtances of ſome object or action which we want to place in a ſtrong light, either a good or a bad one. It is not ſo properly one Figure, as the ſkilful management of ſeveral which we make to tend to one point. It may be carried on by a proper uſe of magnifying or extenuating terms, by a regular enumeration of particulars, or by throwing together, as into one maſs, a crowd of circumſtances; by ſuggeſting compariſons alſo with things of a like nature. But the principal inſtrument by which it works, is by a Climax, or a gradual riſe of one circumſtance above another, till our idea be raiſed to the utmoſt. I ſpoke formerly of a Climax in ſound; a Climax in ſenſe, when well carried on, is a Figure which never fails to amplify ſtrongly. The common example of this is, that noted paſſage in Cicero, which every ſchool-boy knows: "Faci-"nus eſt vincire civem Romanum; ſcelus verbe-"rare; prope parricidium, necare; quid dicam in "crucem tollere *?" I ſhall give an inſtance from

* "It is a crime to put a Roman citizen in bonds; it is the "height of guilt to ſcourge him; little leſs than parricide to put "him to death: what name then ſhall I give to crucifying him?

a printed

a printed pleading of a famous Scotch Lawyer, Sir George M'Kenzie. It is in a charge to the jury, in the caſe of a woman accuſed of murdering her own child. "Gentlemen, if one man had any "how ſlain another, if an adverſary had killed his "oppoſer, or a woman occaſioned the death of "her enemy, even theſe criminals would have "been capitally puniſhed by the Cornelian law: "but, if this guiltleſs infant, who could make no "enemy, had been murdered by its own nurſe, "what puniſhments would not then the mother "have demanded? With what cries and excla-"mations would ſhe have ſtunned your ears? What "ſhall we ſay then, when a woman, guilty of "homicide, a mother of the murder of her inno-"cent child, hath compriſed all thoſe miſdeeds in "one ſingle crime; a crime, in its own nature "deteſtable; in a woman, prodigious; in a mo-"ther, incredible; and perpetrated againſt one "whoſe age called for compaſſion, whoſe near "relation claimed affection, and whoſe innocence "deſerved the higheſt favour?" I muſt take no-tice, however, that ſuch regular Climaxes as theſe, though they have conſiderable beauty, have, at the ſame time, no ſmall appearance of art and ſtudy; and, therefore, though they may be admitted into formal harangues, yet they ſpeak not the language of great earneſtneſs and paſſion, which ſeldom pro-ceed by ſteps ſo regular. Nor, indeed, for the purpoſes of effectual perſuaſion, are they likely to be ſo ſucceſsful, as an arrangement of circumſtances

LECT. XVII.

LECT. XVII. in a leſs artificial order. For, when much art appears, we are always put on our guard againſt the deceits of eloquence; but when a ſpeaker has reaſoned ſtrongly, and, by force of argument, has made good his main point, he may then, taking advantage of the favourable bent of our minds, make uſe of ſuch artificial Figures to confirm our belief, and to warm our minds.

END OF THE FIRST VOLUME.

Strahan and Preſton,
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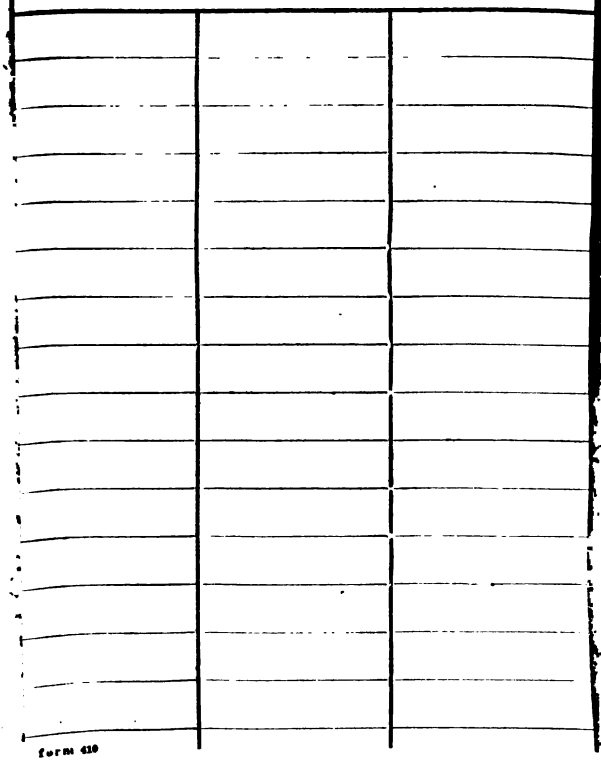

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